



FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

PHOTOSHOP

PAINT AN EPIC
SPACE SCENE

Future

MAKE MAGICAL

CARD ART

Create a unique game character with **Alexi Briclot**
PLUS! Master storytelling in your card designs

Workshop

**HOW TO PLAN
A PAINTING**

Inside

**DEPICT A MISTY
CASTLE SETTING**

**PAINT A RANGE
OF SKIN TYPES**

**ADD TENSION TO
A MYTHIC BATTLE**

NEW DEALER! THE AMAZING ILLUSTRATIONS BEHIND APPLIBOT'S SUCCESS

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Welcome... to a Magic issue



Trading card art has never been more popular. Knowing that Magic: The Gathering was embarking on its 20th anniversary, we simply had to track down some of the amazing artists who have made the card battles so memorable. So over on page 40 you'll find art and insight from the likes of Jason Chan, Scott M

Fisher and our recent cover artist John Stanko.

The magic doesn't stop there. In our workshops section you'll learn from the professionals how to create your own card art. Leading with cover artist Aleksy Briclot who paints a game character on page 64, we also have a workshop from Volkan Baga on page 66 in which the German artist reveals the art of storytelling in card illustrations.

There's more to glean in our workshop section than card art, too. I'm very pleased to finally be able to share a workshop from leading concept artist Sparth, who on page 78 reveals his process to 'sculpt' a sci-fi scene in Photoshop. Also, Dave Rapoza returns to these pages and shows how to plan a dark and brooding fantasy painting.

Don't forget that ImagineFX #100 is only a few weeks away as I write this. We're planning a special issue and have a host of wonderful artists returning to the magazine to share their techniques in next issue's special, including Genzoman, Marta Dahlig and Raymond Swanland. Turn to page 86 to get an idea of what's in store! And why not take out a subscription to ensure that you get issue 100 delivered promptly to your door. See page 30 for our latest money-saving offer.

Ian Dean, Editor
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Our special cover for subscribers this issue.

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Jennifer Healy's melancholy, narrative-rich sketches have given us a case of paramnesia – and we rather like it.

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Showcasing some of Applibot's stunning imagery – the card game company has employed some the world's best artists.

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"I don't know a thing about what a card actually does until I see the finished thing"

Jason Chan on the mysteries of a Magic card

Reader
FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 6 for the best new art ➔

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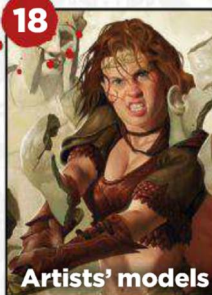
Video game boss

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The art of Applibot

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Character variations

ImagineFX Workshops

Advice and techniques
from pro artists...



64 Rework an iconic card character

Aleksi Briclot mixes fantasy, manga and tech.



66 Tell a story with your card art

Volkan Baga creates narratives with his details.



70 Compose a group of characters

Jose Daniel Cabrera Peña taps into Greek mythology.



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Chad Weatherford applies atmospheric effects.



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Paul Tysall shares his Procreate custom brushes.



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Sparth on the principles of digital image creation.



82 Plan and execute a fantasy scene

Dave Rapoza reveals how he develops a concept.

Artist Q&A

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How to paint the Golden Ratio, body shapes under clothes, skin types, patterned scales, glorious light, underwater monsters and more.



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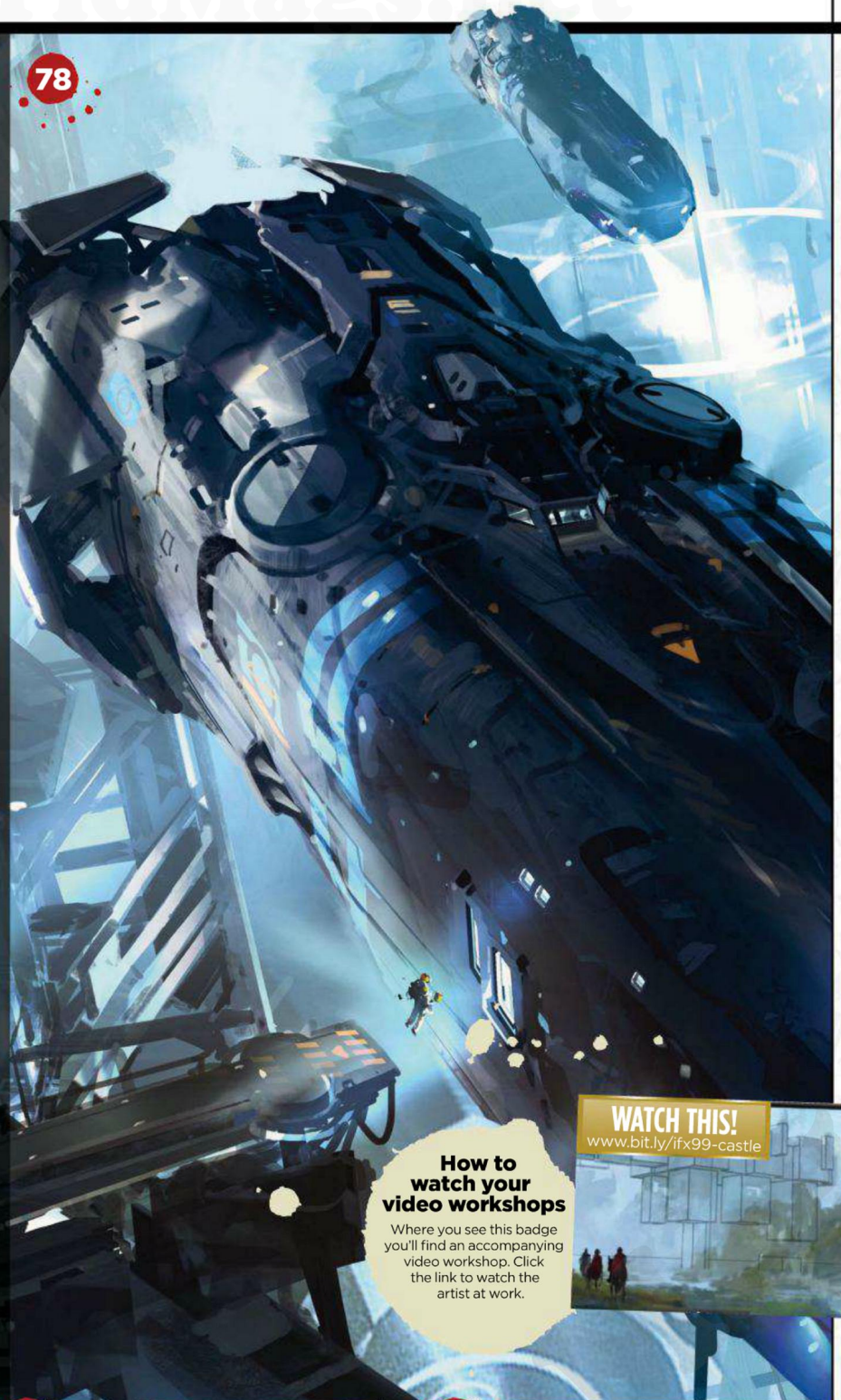


Tell a story with your art

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Compose a group of figures



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How to watch your video workshops

Where you see this badge you'll find an accompanying video workshop. Click the link to watch the artist at work.

WATCH THIS!

www.bit.ly/ix99-castle



Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR FANTASY ART



Dong Kyun Ryu

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MEDIA: Maya, ZBrush, Photoshop



Dong was born in South Korea but has been living in Los Angeles since the age of 10, where he works at Rogues Gallery VFX as a 2D and 3D concept artist.

"Along with designing concepts, I'm also capable of working on storyboards, matte painting and 3D modelling," he says. "My goal was to originally become a comic book artist, but as I grew older that started to change."

An ardent student of his craft, Dong graduated from the Pasadena Art Center College of Design in 2009, before continuing on to study at the Gnomon School of Visual Effects, graduating in 2012. "My next goal will be to try and make a film of my own," he says.

1 UNDERWATER "I originally gave this piece the working title On Mission Part II because I couldn't find a good name for it. In this painting, people are exploring under the ocean when they discover an abandoned city, which looks like Atlantis."

2 ON MISSION "I wanted to create a piece that was dark, mysterious and symbolic. I think I did pretty well with that. This super graphic is hung on the Gnomon School building wall, but originally was for my Art Center show. I had to repaint it for Alex Alvarez."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Dong - you've won yourself a copy of *Exposé 10* and *d'artiste: Character Design*! To find out more about these two great books, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.

1



Artist crit

**Ubisoft artist Donglu Yu on
Dong's use of contrast...**



"The scale, lighting and values direct the viewer to the characters, who then follows the light source to the discovery of the underwater creature. Bravo!"

Jimmy Ling

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Painter



"Straight from the cradle, I knew I was born to breathe art," Jimmy tells us, as he prepares for the final stages of his degree in Illustration at Academy of Art.

When Jimmy isn't occupied with his art, he enjoys it in all its forms, including video games, dance and basketball, which perhaps explains the sense of movement and rhythm that we can see in his work.

Jimmy adores the masters of the past and present, with the likes of Leonardo da Vinci and Caravaggio gracing the same list as Jon Foster and Kekai Kotaki, whose works "emit certain styles of dynamism and composition".



1 REDEMPTION OF A FALLEN ANGEL

"Can a fallen angel be redeemed? This is an angel leaving its demonic form, coming from the dark into the light. You can see his skin breaking apart to reveal the beauty underneath."

2 THE BLOOD LORD "The Blood Lord possesses hidden powers along with his ability to control form and create magic from blood itself. He's dangerous not only to his adversaries, but he can also turn on his own allies because of the magic's power."

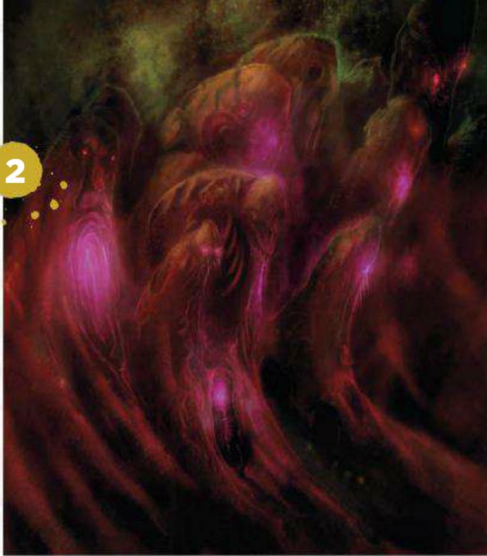
3 THE CHALLENGER "A lone and powerful sorcerer takes it upon himself to rid the area of a powerful tribe of warriors called Hungrats. I really like the sombre and dark mood I've created in this piece, which I managed to paint in five hours."



1



2



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Inspired by HP Lovecraft and the world around him, Brooke conjures up some arresting images. A mass of followers huddled in rows at the feet of Cthulhu is subtly evocative."
Ian Dean,
Editor

+ Brooke Johnson

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MEDIA: Photoshop, Painter



When Brooke was young, he first took inspiration from popular cartoons such as Transformers, before the subject of geology opened up his eyes to the world beneath our feet. "I started to draw the fossils I found and other prehistoric creatures," he says, "with my favourites being the truly alien and ancient Ediacarans and Cambrian fauna."

Brooke then started to create his own distant worlds to illustrate and populate. "I've always had a need to see round the next cove, over the next hill or just that one step further and that's something I like to try and get across into my art."

1 THE SCARY GIRL "A darkly comic homage to HP Lovecraft and Ramsey Campbell. I wanted the little girl to look pleased with her discovery in the dark and the creature itself to look eager to be shared with her friends but still have the feeling of unearthly otherness."

2 DEATH AT THE GATES OF DELIRIUM "I grew up in Teesside, which is heavily industrialised and part of the inspiration for the visuals of Blade Runner. I imagined a future where rusting machines had consumed the Earth and a new kind of life had evolved to cope with a poisoned world."

3 FROM UNDER THE ALUM SHALE "Alum Shale was mined extensively on the local coast and the miners found the remains of strange creatures from the ancient seas. From these fossils grew myths and this picture is one such story given a Lovecraftian reworking."



Jonathan Kuo

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Jonathan is a classically trained illustrator who's well versed in both traditional and digital mediums. He works as a concept artist for Rebel Entertainment, along with teaching animal drawing at the Concept Design Academy and Laguna College of Art and Design. Jonathan graduated from the Laguna College of Art and Design, and "was honoured to be mentored by master animal painter Joe Weatherly. I tend to focus on creating work that tells a story by using dynamic and expressive poses to create a connection between the piece and the viewer."

It's great to see Jonathan tap into his childhood fascination with prehistoric creatures. "I've never grown out of them," he tells us - and that's a very good thing.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



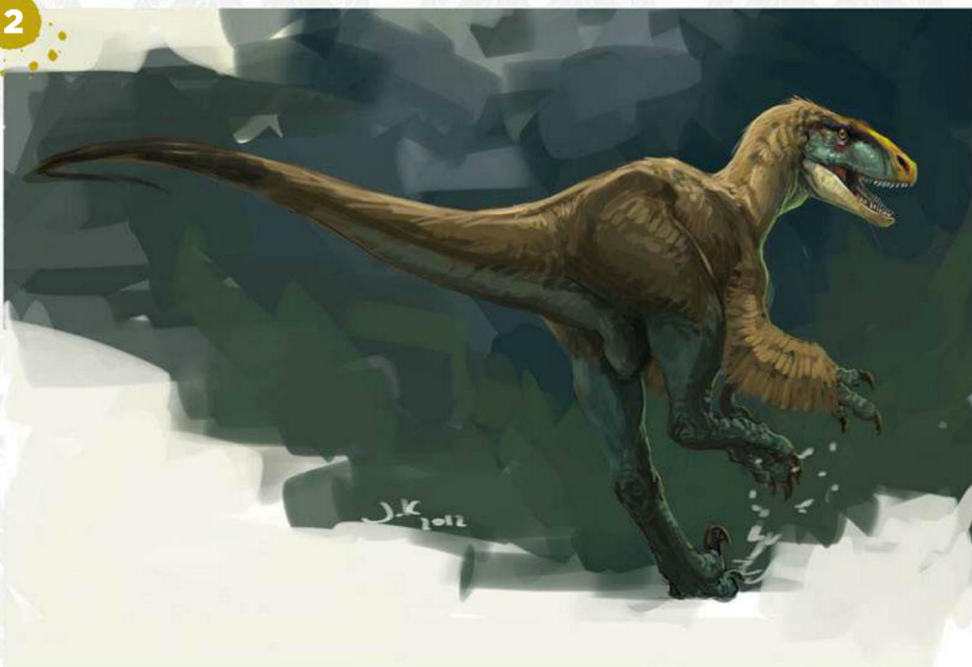
"Seeing Jonathan's paleoart brings my childhood love of dinosaurs rushing back. His style straddles the disciplines of concept art and illustration, with dynamic storytelling thrown in for good measure. More please!"

Cliff Hope,
Operations Editor

1



2



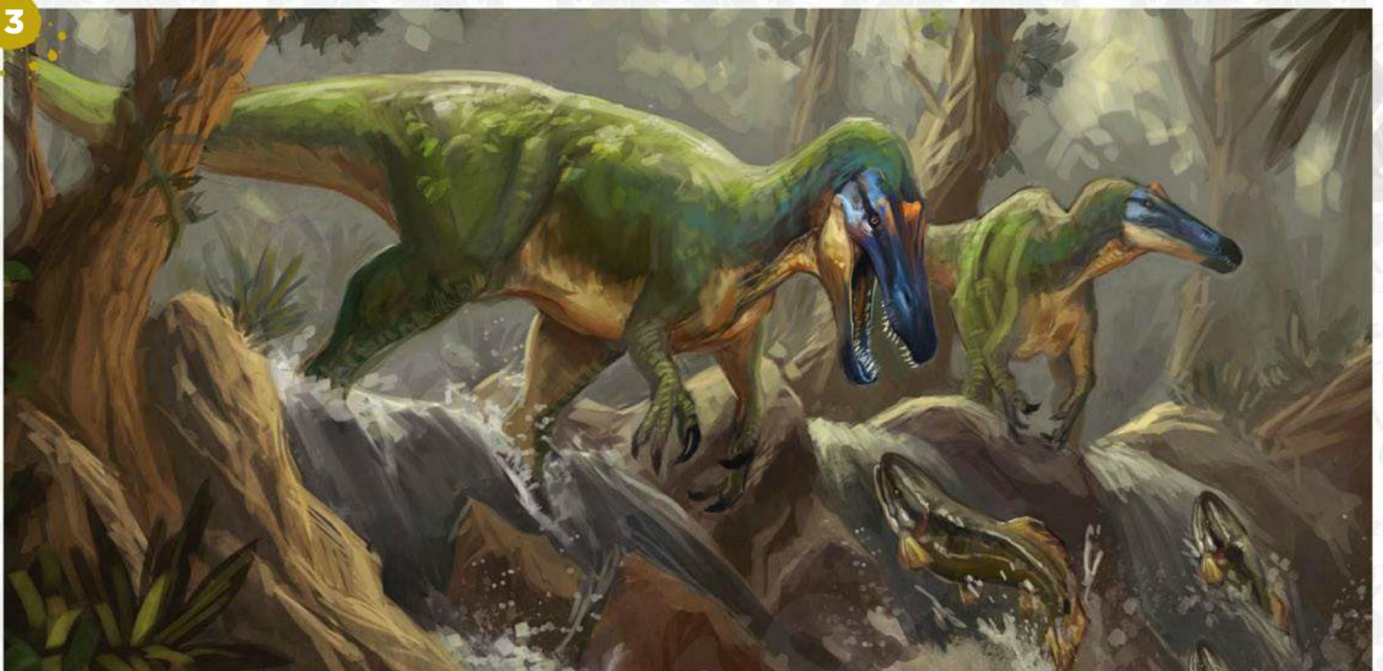
1 FOOD FIGHT "I read about T-rex skulls that had been found with bite marks from other rival dinosaurs, and it made me wonder how two of a kind would start a fight. So here we have two T-rex that are about to fight for a Triceratops carcass."

2 RAPTOR "This is a coloured sketch I made during lunch one day - I was trying to capture the speed and mobility of the raptor. A lot of books still portray dinosaurs as dumb lizards, so I wanted to demonstrate that they were clever creatures, which were more similar to birds than reptiles."

3 BARYONYX "Crocs and bears wait by waterfalls to catch easy meals, and so I thought that the fish-eating dinosaur, Baryonyx, might do the same thing. I wanted to show that dinosaurs were not monsters, but animals."



3



Britton Snyder

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MEDIA: Oils



Having already worked on iconic video games franchises such as Diablo and Warcraft, Britton is an excellent mentor to have on your side. "I started out working as an artist in video game development 13 years ago and currently teach at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, US."

When working in the games industry, Britton created 2D and 3D artwork on titles such as Diablo II, Warcraft III, DeBlob and Dragonshard, and shares his wisdom with his students. He also regularly works as a freelance artist, and is starting to publicly exhibit his paintings, with the view of moving the direction of his personal work into the realm of fine art.



1

1 TWISTING "This image was an improvised session where I put my subconscious onto the canvas. I've always liked the look of finding order in chaos and the meaning an artist can assign to the natural, abstract shapes."

2 TECHNOPHOBIA "The focus of this painting is the duality of art and technology. I have huge respect for digital work and at the same time, I like the look of paint applied to canvas. This was my visualisation of the inner turmoil this can create for an artist."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Although his CV has the likes of Diablo II and Warcraft III in it, Britton's personal art is more Phil Hale than Halo. There's the 'inner turmoil' of his Technophobe piece and the bewildering abstract Twisting."

Beren Neale,
Digital Editor

2



Andy Wright

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MEDIA: Photoshop



Andy's been working in the creative industry for over 20 years in the animation and video game sectors.

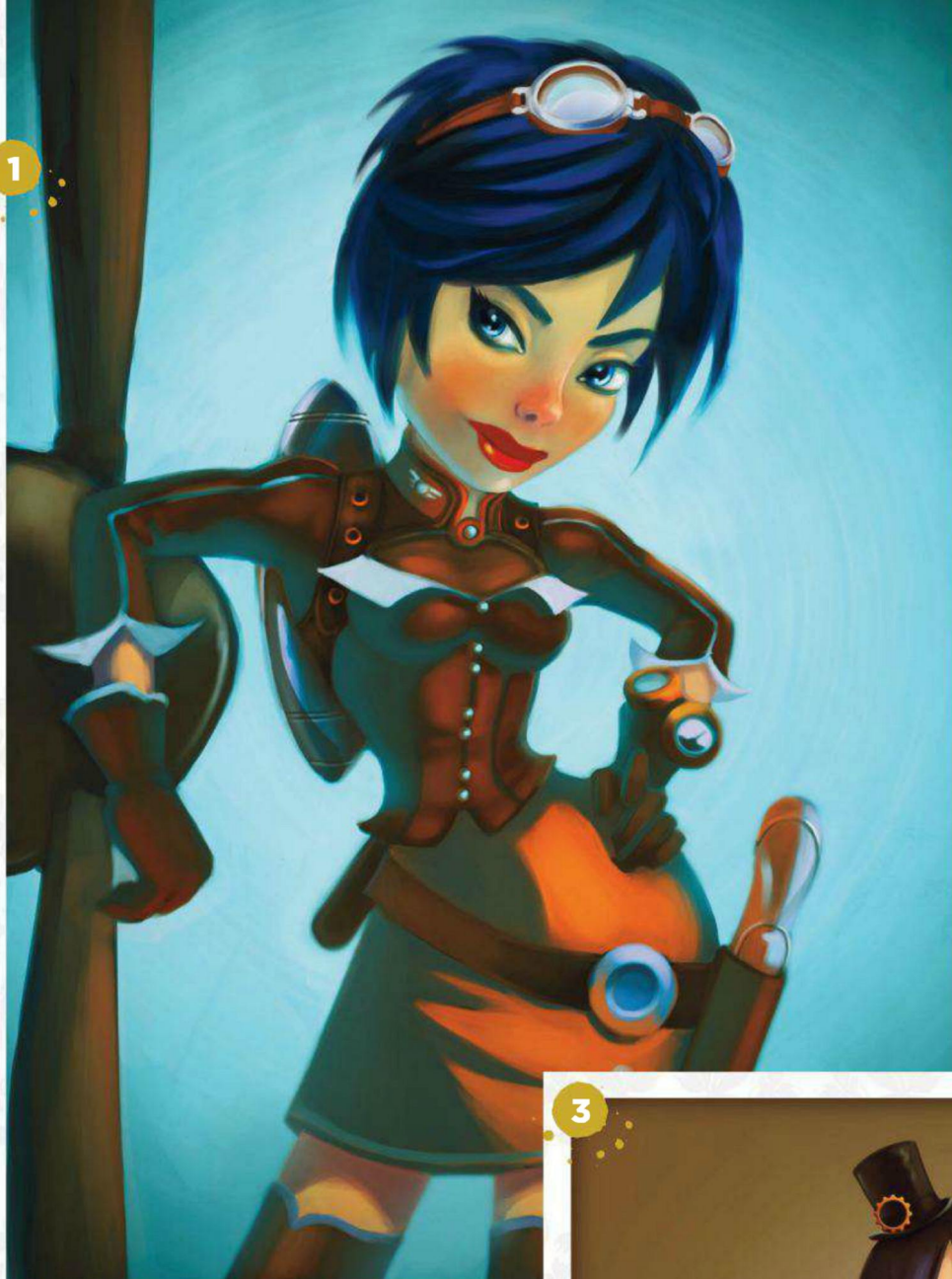
"After leaving college, I worked for Siriol Productions in Cardiff on animated TV shows and features. I made the move to computer games in the mid-90s, working for companies such as Acclaim, Swordfish and Deadline Games as a concept artist and designer."

Although Andy works digitally, he's still accustomed to sketching out his work before taking it to the computer, and finds inspiration in the works of Brian Froud, James Gurney and Shane Glines.

1 AIR CADET "I have a fondness for the steampunk genre - well, dieselpunk in this case. I had a sketch lying around for ages of this character, so I decided to paint her up."

2 LOST IN MUSIC "I had this image buzzing around in my head of someone getting down to some sounds. I liked the way the spiral lead turned out and how the light is catching her."

3 COGS "I like to try out new techniques, and his image was originally made purely of selection paths and gradients. I wasn't really happy with the end result and so decided to rework it and give it a more 'painterly' feel. I named the bird Cogs, who is the pet of an airship crew."



+ John Watkiss

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MEDIA: Acrylic, charcoal, markers



Many of you will have followed John's anatomy workshop in issue 94, which is why it's such a delight to showcase his work here. John's love for art sprung from his ardent study of the human form, which became something of a speciality throughout his artistic career.

"After graduating from Brighton University, I went on to teach anatomy and figure drawing publicly at The Royal College of Art London, and privately at Richard Williams Animation. My command of the painted medium came later in my career, and found its pinnacle while working on Disney's Tarzan painting visual development and concept art."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Where to begin? Along with a solid devotion to the human form, John's ability to tap into the emotional qualities of colour is incredible. The clarity and crispness of his palette really draws you in for a closer look."

Nicola Henderson,
Staff Writer

1 CONAN THE SLAYER "In the true spirit of Robert E Howard, I wanted to recreate the aftermath of a battle in the iconic sense of the word, with the centrally placed barbarian next to the potential claim on the woman who has been saved. She's not so sure about the situation, however."

2 DISNEY'S TARZAN CONCEPT ART "Nothing could prepare Tarzan for his first vision of the westernised woman Jane. I chose this composition to show his sense of curiosity and reserve."

3 MILLENNIUM MURAL "Deep in the caves of Altamira, in the Paleolithic era, the first hunter-illustrators play out their wishful thinking by means of art on the deep, cavernous walls."

4 SWORD WOMAN "After the first killing, the Sword Woman finds herself in the middle of the forest, with no sympathetic ear to the dilemma of this terribly lonely situation. This composition was used to demonstrate the plight of this innocent woman who committed the act of murder."

5 SANDMAN VEGAS 2012 "The occult gamble presided over by the Sandman, where the game is rigged and the table is tilted. It prepares people for the end of the game within the cosmic casino. Only the Sandman knows that this is a joke."





Sandman is property of DC Comics

Anthony Christou

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MEDIA: Photoshop, SketchUp Pro, Maya, ZBrush



Anthony has always been driven by his passion for the arts, taking inspiration from video games and movies along with the likes of Salvador Dali, Todd McFarlane and Craig Mullins. He started out his artistic career working in the realm of graphic design and fine art, before eventually discovering a deeper passion for illustration and concept art in 2008.

"Over the past four years, I've trained myself while growing my freelance concept art and illustration studio. I'm busy producing artwork for international video game studios, publishers, comic books, animation studios and advertising agencies. I'm always looking for new clients and projects to help my freelance business grow."

1 ORC SHAMAN "This was a submission to Dungeons & Dragons. The idea was to make an elemental shaman who could harness the elemental energies of fire, water and air. I've always loved D&D and whether my submission is accepted by Wizards of the Coast or not, I'd love to create art for the company one day."

2 THE RUINED TEMPLE "I wanted to create a place that was eerie, but also ancient and spiritual. I'm a massive fan of Indiana Jones and the Uncharted series, and wanted to tap into my Greek-Cypriot heritage. I try and reflect as many cultures in my work as possible."

SEND US YOUR ARTWORK!

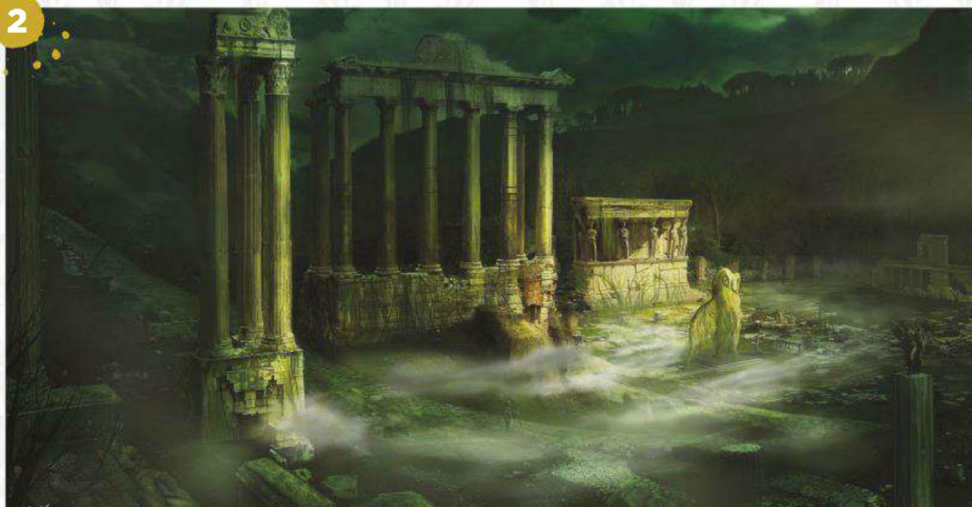
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AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY



“Many of the models I work with are artists or photographers themselves, so they often have great ideas”

John Stanko

Matching a model's personality to a character is equally as important as their appearance for John Stanko.





A MOVING EXPERIENCE

A moving comic book? You betcha. Bobby Chiu and three fellow artists are releasing comics Niko and the Sword of Light as iPad apps. **Page 21**



TITANFALL EFFORT

Titanfall's lead Joel Emslie explains how Ridley Scott's wisdom, and building model mechs, helped enhance the game's design process. **Page 23**



USE YOUR ILLUSIONS

Clint Cearley admits he removed all the dirty dishes before photographing his studio to give us "the illusion of professionalism". **Page 24**

More than just a pretty face

Model behaviour Models are still an essential part of the creative process – so what's the secret to a good working relationship?

In our digital age, it's never been easier for artists to find reference material to help shape their vision. In just a few clicks, you can find whatever kind of pose, texture or landscape you require without having to go through the process of sourcing these kinds of things from scratch.

While it's obviously not a bad thing to draw from reference photos, there's nothing quite like observing the real thing, especially in regards to recreating the human form.



"Cameras do lie," John Stanko tells us. "They flatten things out and can create all kinds of odd foreshortening issues."

When you see the kinds of dramatic compositions fantasy artists create, it makes you wonder how models and artists must prepare for those all-important posing sessions. "Most of my shoots are 90-plus minutes of gruelling poses, so if it's their first shoot with me I give them fair warning that modelling is not easy work," explains John.

When you consider the diversity of client needs, from figure-drawing classes to individual artists, it takes an extraordinary amount of endurance and discipline to meet



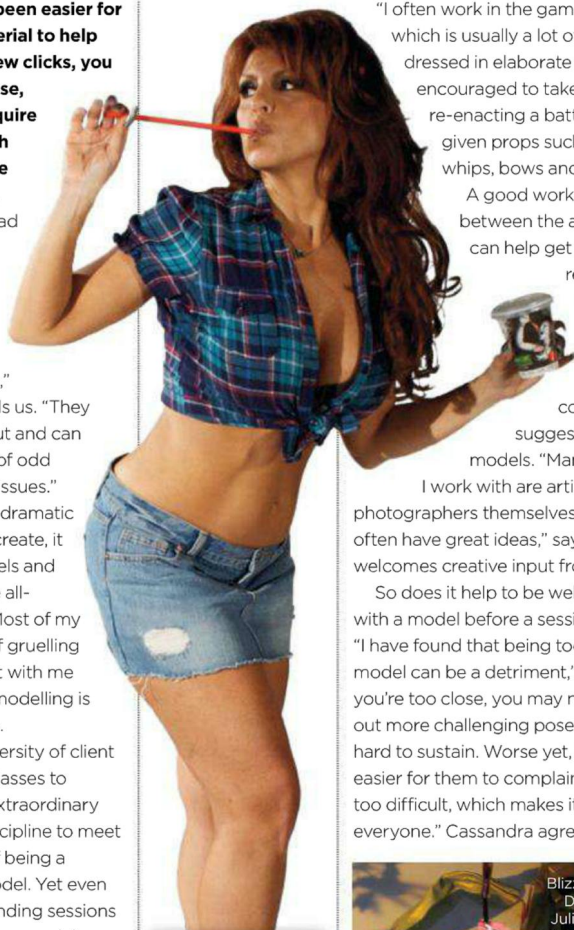
the demands of being a professional model. Yet even the most demanding sessions are worthwhile, as model Cassandra Hierholzer attests.



Cassandra posed for Jane Radstrom's emotive cover for our Digital Painting special issue.



Stacy E Walker recently modelled for Silver's POSEBOOK app, available on iPad and iPhone.

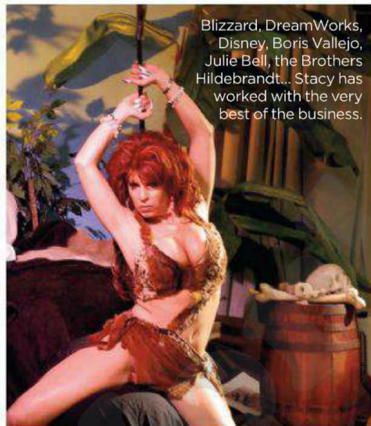


"I often work in the gaming industry, which is usually a lot of fun. Models are dressed in elaborate costumes, encouraged to take poses as though re-enacting a battle scene, and given props such as swords, whips, bows and arrows."

A good working relationship between the artist and model can help get the kinds of results an artist has in mind, especially when the artist is open to collaboration or suggestions from their models. "Many of the models

I work with are artists or photographers themselves, and so they often have great ideas," says John, who welcomes creative input from his sitters.

So does it help to be well acquainted with a model before a session? Not always. "I have found that being too close to a model can be a detriment," John tells us. "If you're too close, you may not have them try out more challenging poses that may be hard to sustain. Worse yet, it can make it easier for them to complain that poses are too difficult, which makes it awkward for everyone." Cassandra agrees that



Blizzard, DreamWorks, Disney, Boris Vallejo, Julie Bell, the Brothers Hildebrandt... Stacy has worked with the very best of the business.

Millie-Hill - ©2013 Bob Kato The Drawing Club

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

STACY E WALKER

The respected professional on what artists look for in a model

How do you approach your duties as a model?

I bring anything I think will add to the success of the session, to help the artist tell their story. I think it's a big reason why I earned the reputation I have and why I'm still modelling on a full-time basis. I always push to bring a dynamic quality to my work, even if it's a more sensitive moment. From the look in my eyes to the unique way I use my hands, I put my entire body into every pose. I will push the hip and shoulder to the extreme with a lot of twists and turns. My style, along with knowledge of the creative process, is a big part of why there's such a high demand to work with me. I view myself more as a collaborator and not just a model.

How does it feel to see your likeness in countless forms?

My image has been featured on book covers, calendars, trading cards, magazine covers, T-shirts, statues, comics posters, knives and lamps. I've been very fortunate to work with some of the most talented artists in the industry and knowing that you've inspired their work is a great honour.

Any advice for artists seeking to approach a model?

Prepare a model release form so everyone knows up front what the rules are. While there are people who model in their spare time, there are people who do this professionally and you should recognise the difference. Don't expect models to work for free. And if you have a model's image prominently featured in your work, try to give the model credit, as well as a copy of the image. And always admit to using a model.



Stacy has modelled for many global media giants, and has recently contributed to Silver's POSEBOOK app.

www.stacywalker.com

Continued from previous page...



© Wizards of the Coast

It was fourth time lucky for John when searching for the right model - it's like finding an actor for a specific film role.

anonymity can be a valuable tool for the model to tap into. "When I pose for someone I don't know, I can be anyone and do anything. It's not so easy to pull one over on a close friend. Saying that, familiarity provides an opportunity for both parties to be more comfortable and open to ideas, poses and themes that might be difficult to broach with a stranger."

How does an artist find a model to meet their needs? John thinks it's similar to looking for an actor to play a certain role. "Once, I was working on a piece for D&D and had tried three different models, but none could quite capture the essence I wanted. Luckily, my fourth model nailed it in less than 10 minutes. It was amazing and is still one of my favourite pieces."

Websites such as www.modelmayhem.com intend to help the search for models, with the backing of an official channel giving stability for both parties. "The work models most want to take part in is where artists are communicative and excited about the project," says Cassandra. "Meeting a model to tell them about your ideas in person will help instil trust, as well as understanding of the artist's vision."



© Wizards of the Coast

It's important to mix reference sources and go beyond what the camera sees to get the best results.



Awards were presented to 21 graduates, with many more to come.



3dsense Media School SINGAPORE
School of Interactive Visual Arts | WWW.3DSENSE.NET

CG Heroes unite!

Alumni assemble 3dsense celebrates 10 years of excellence by honouring its most famous students



3dsense Media School in Singapore turns 10 this summer, and to celebrate the achievements of students from the past and present, the school has launched the inaugural CG Hero Awards.

"This celebration is a tribute to all our alumni who have contributed to the growth of the computer graphics and entertainment industry over the past 10 years," says Sen Lai, principal and CEO of 3dsense Media School. "Their success

proves that Singapore today can truly boast a robust ecosystem for producing CG talent for the global market."

The school has played an active role in developing the skills of aspiring artists looking to break into the international design industry, with graduates joining the creative teams of companies including Ubisoft, Lucasfilm and Double Negative. Veterans like Feng Zhu have also had a hand in the expansion of the school, a success the team hopes to build upon in the future. Find out more at www.3dsense.net.



The school prides itself in equipping students with the skills global companies seek.



Ang Jyh Yang was named a CG Hero for his contributions to Ubisoft's Assassin's Creed 3.



Graduate John David Marte was awarded for his input on The Avengers film.

To Infinity and beyond

Techy toy box If anyone can strike a balance between familiar and unique, it's Disney - and the company's modernising the toy box

The approach to design was to think of both virtual and physical characters as toys.



© Disney



Disney is bringing the toy box up to date with its upcoming game Disney Infinity, in which real-life figurines interact with virtual interfaces. We were curious to find out how the design team approached the challenge of capturing character likenesses in every kind of dimension imaginable, from 2D concept art to actual toys.

"All of the characters have been redesigned to fit into the Disney Infinity universe and were made to look like toys," says Jeff Bunker, studio art director at Avalanche Software.

Jeff was tasked with defining the art style that would "encompass all things Disney" in physical and virtual forms, "to allow this diverse group of characters and worlds to feel like they belonged together."

"The biggest challenge in the character design was finding the sweet spot where we were making a strong-enough statement that you could clearly identify the figures as Disney Infinity figures, yet also maintain the essence of the characters and faithfully represent each property."

Visit <https://infinity.disney.com> for more information.

Make way for Niko

Light speed What better way to show your love for comic books than bringing something new to the table?



After working together on Hollywood blockbusters *Alice in Wonderland* and *Men in Black III*, Bobby Chiu and Kei Acedera, along with fellow artists Jim Bryson and Adam Jeffcoat, are gearing up to release *Niko and the Sword of Light*.

It's an unusual moving comic book that combines the traditional comic book format with animation and sound for a truly engaging experience. The comic will be released as an iPad app this August, along with a later edition for Android formats.

Bobby tells us that the project was inspired by a shared love for comic books, which has driven each of the four artists in their careers in the animation and film industries. "It felt like the perfect opportunity to merge the two together: our love of comic books and animation." The project was taken to Kickstarter, where it surpassed its original funding goal, which is surely an encouraging sign.

"We thought it would be a great way to raise awareness before the app actually came out, and of course the money was a nice help as well. It was a lot of work and a lot of fun, and it all paid off in the end. So it was definitely worth it."

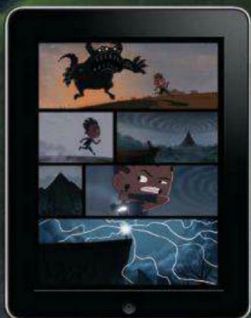
You can keep up to date with the project at the Niko Facebook page: go to www.bit.ly/ifx-niko.

The visual style created by Bobby and co translates beautifully from concept art to final animation.



If Niko's first adventure does well, there may well be further instalments down the line.

The project combines all of the best bits about animation and traditional comics.



“Niko felt like the perfect opportunity to merge the two together: our love of comic books and animation”

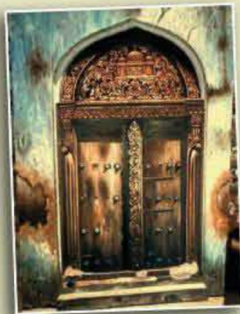
FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Khalfani Suleiman Abdallah

f "Oil on canvas."
www.bit.ly/ifx-ksb-door



Izzy Reza

f "My task was to draw a gargoyle using anatomy and perspective."
www.bit.ly/ifx-izzy-reza



Gillian Reid (gillianimation)

t "It was fun doing an A-Z of animal drawings."
www.bit.ly/ifx-gillianimation



Just finished something you want us to shout about? Send it our way on Twitter (@imaginefx), or find us on Facebook!



Hatboy
by Vaughn Pinpin



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"I used my wife as a model – wearing a bed sheet. I made her younger and prettier. She's lovely, of course, but no space princess!"

Divorce lawyers may wish to get in touch with the Horley household... See page 56

Crowning achievement

Black books We're all used to narrative-driven gaming experiences, but perhaps not quite like this one, illustrated by Paul Arendt

Book publisher Random House recently launched the **Black Crown Project**, an ambitious narrative experience that combines elements of gaming and story-telling in an episodic, free-to-play interactive novel.

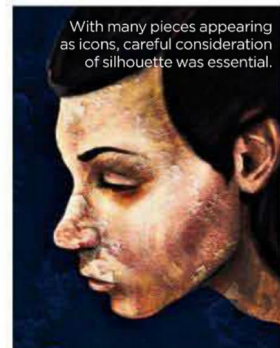
Written by debut author Rob Sherman, *Black Crown* is brought to life by the engrossing illustrations of Paul Arendt. "Rob's writing is a gift to an illustrator, being full of fantastically twisted imagery," says Paul, who was directly inspired by the role of texture in Rob's prose. "I wanted my imagery to feel like it was something you could run your fingers over, even in the more sinister pieces," he says.

With having more of a naturally cartoony approach, the project took Paul out of his stylistic comfort zone. "Black Crown is painterly, wild and semi-abstract, which was a

challenge, especially in regards to some of the reference research. My screen was always full of lurid pictures of dissected stomachs, beetles and diseased skin. It was pretty disturbing!"

Visit www.blackcrownproject.com to play and head over to Paul's deviantART page at www.bit.ly/da-arendt.

Paul had a tremendous amount of creative freedom, despite being so closely tied to prose.



With many pieces appearing as icons, careful consideration of silhouette was essential.



Environments are crucial in conveying the desired sense of scale of the Titans and grand elements.

Rise of the Titans

Tanked up Titanfall's lead designer explains how building real mechs helped enhance the game's design

After making its debut at this year's E3 conference, Respawn Entertainment's mech 'em up, Titanfall, is looking pretty awesome so far.

While we love the prospect of whizzing around in giant robots, the visual design has caught our attention, because it all just looks so natural. Lead artist Joel Emslie says that the words of Ridley Scott proved an influence on the game's design. "To quote Ridley, the future is old - it's not new, it's



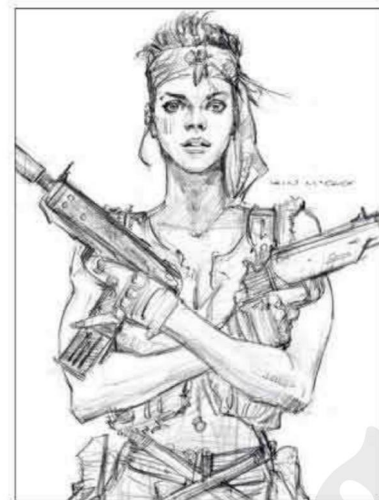
used. Titanfall has its roots in a few styles out there, but I think the best way to describe its visual style would be futuristic, gritty and off-world."

When it came to the mech design, Joel and his team discovered a practical approach was key to creating strong designs that could translate from 2D concept to fully realised models - literally. "We tried our hand at scratch building and modding up plastic model kits, adding whatever else you can find to stick on that model to make it look cool. This process ended up being a fantastic way to explore new designs and communicate to everyone, with a tangible model that could sit on a table. Building something in the real world has restrictions, but that spawned new ideas and creative solutions that we would not have thought of if we stuck to 2D concept art."

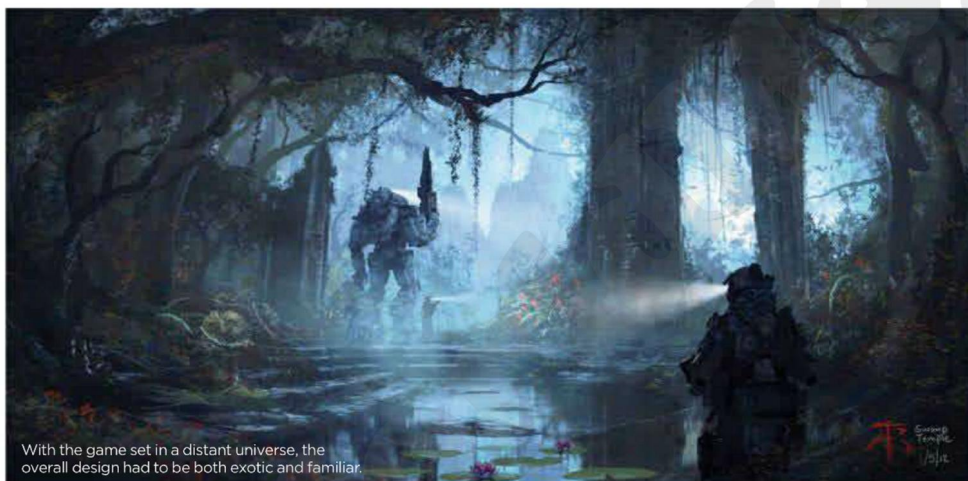
Titanfall is due for release in the spring of 2014. Visit www.titanfall.com for more.



The team were keen not to fall into the trap of over-designing everything, in order to stay natural and realistic.



Wear and tear is important in character design. Veteran artist Iain McCaig clearly had an off-world army surplus store in mind when he drew this.



With the game set in a distant universe, the overall design had to be both exotic and familiar.



+deviantWATCH

Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART...



Mike Mahle

www.mikemahle.deviantart.com

Welcome to Mike's bright and beautiful world! We love his stylish collection of quirky pin-up pieces, where sharp contrasts and deadly curves reign supreme. It's not all about the ladies, mind - there are many great renditions of classic comic characters, all decked out in Mike's retro style.



© Fantasy Flight Games

yigitkoroglu

www.yigitkoroglu.deviantart.com

We featured Yigit Koroglu in FXPosé back in issue 59, and he's certainly gone from strength to strength. His portfolio is full of incredibly detailed pieces created for clients including Applibot and Fantasy Flight Games, all making great use of his soft and intricate painting style.



Michelle Hoefener

www.bit.ly/ifx-mhoefener

With commission after commission, it's easy to see why Michelle Hoefener finds her skills highly sought-after. We like the scope of subjects she covers in her portfolio, with many images taking influence from different art movements and styles. Her pencil work is especially impressive.



I found myself needing to include skulls in art pieces with regularity, so I picked up this \$7 plastic model from a Halloween store. Some of the best money I ever spent.



I'm usually more successful sketching in my sketchbook than on the computer.



Clint Cearley

Space invader With model skulls, looted signs, dirty dishes and chore lists, there's no such thing as a blank space in Clint's workplace



Despite my best intentions, my desk doesn't usually look like this. As a freelance artist I work from home, so what you see here is my work area set up in the living room. What you don't see is the usual foot-high stacks of books, old mail and dirty dishes that

pile the desk (which were removed for the illusion of professionalism).

I worked at this setup for a couple of days before deciding the blank wall behind my computer had to go. It was soon covered with the large cork board full of articles torn from magazines, travel photos, contact info and other memorabilia, and stands as a

Sometimes I prop up my Kindle Fire on the printer and have movies playing while I work. That way I can still keep my images full-screen on the computer.

Hey look, it's the cool poster by Android Jones that came in the 50th issue of ImagineFX!



remarkably accurate representation of the inside of my head.

The desk itself is a heavy metal monster and was the one my dad used in college. Over the computer I have hung a green paper lantern that does a good job of lighting the corner area and giving subdued light at night, while behind it is a sign that simply reads "BARGAINS", which I picked up from a closing bookstore.

Most of my work is digital and that operation revolves around the 27-inch iMac that I had upgraded with 16GB RAM. Having grown up on PCs, I switched to Macs when I turned freelance and I've never gone back.

Away from finished digital pieces, I prefer to work out my character designs and basic compositions in my Moleskine sketchbook, which is kept on the desk. The Moleskine's thick off-white paper, convenient size and

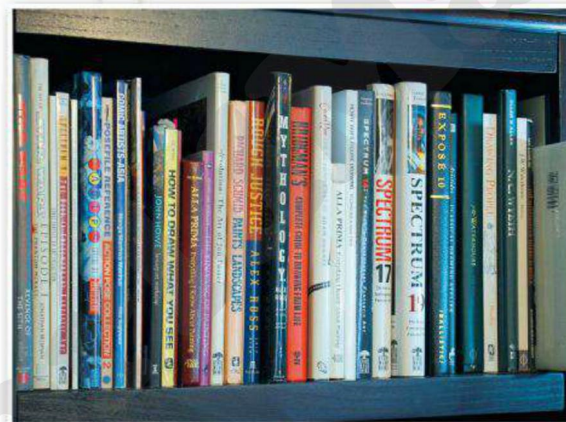
binding that keeps the pages from rubbing against each other make it my favourite when it comes to sketchbooks. Equally as important are my notebooks for lists. With half a dozen irons in the fire at any time, lists are the only way for me to keep on track and stay sane.

Looking at other art inspires and challenges me more than anything else, so a collection of my favourite art books are kept on the bookcase next to the desk. I don't buy much in the way of cool goodies, but on top of the bookcase I do have a great TARDIS model my mom bought me and a surprising realistic plastic skull I picked up from a Halloween store, which has served as a great reference more than once.

Clint is a freelance illustrator and digital art instructor, with clients including Wizards of the Coast. See his work at www.clintcearley.com.

My back-up drive. If you don't have one, get one. If you have one, use it.

My interface is a Wacom Bamboo. Because I use the keyboard for shortcuts, I don't need the programmable buttons on the higher models.



Books are a big source of inspiration. This is a selection of some of my favourites.

Winners

Image of the month

Self-portrait It's official – everyone can relate to the characters from The Lord of the Rings on a personal level as well as an imaginative one



Self-portraits are always interesting projects for artists, but the chance to add an extra fantasy flair to the mix made the process a little more exciting for Forum challenge participants.

For our winner Vince, the tragi-heroic Boromir became the foundation of his fantasy alter-ego. "I knew I couldn't create a typical head and shoulders portrait, because I would lose the opportunity to include the various narrative elements that defined his demise."

Vince is being a little hard on himself. We think it's a great piece. "I originally wanted to only detail the focal areas and leave the other areas sketchier. I need to work on not getting bogged down in details, but I guess that's why we do these challenges. Where better to do this than with others also battling their own demons?"

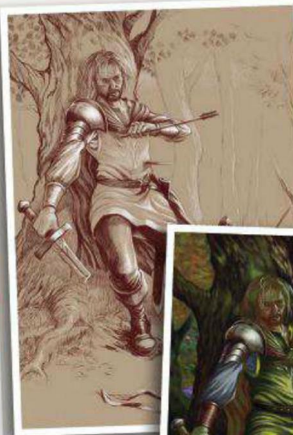
MYFX TITLE: Fantasy Self-Portrait
WINNER: Vince Hewitt (Midscrawl)
GALLERY: www.bit.ly/ifx-midscrawl
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx-may2013

WIN PRIZES!

Congratulations Vince – you've won two ImagineFX specials of your choice! To get your hands on some ImagineFX specials, see our Forum challenges now at <http://community.imaginefx.com/forums>.



A scene depicting the fall of Boromir after a moment of weakness was an intriguing motif for a self-portrait.



The scene that Vince chose to depict looks just as good as a sketch as it does a final piece.

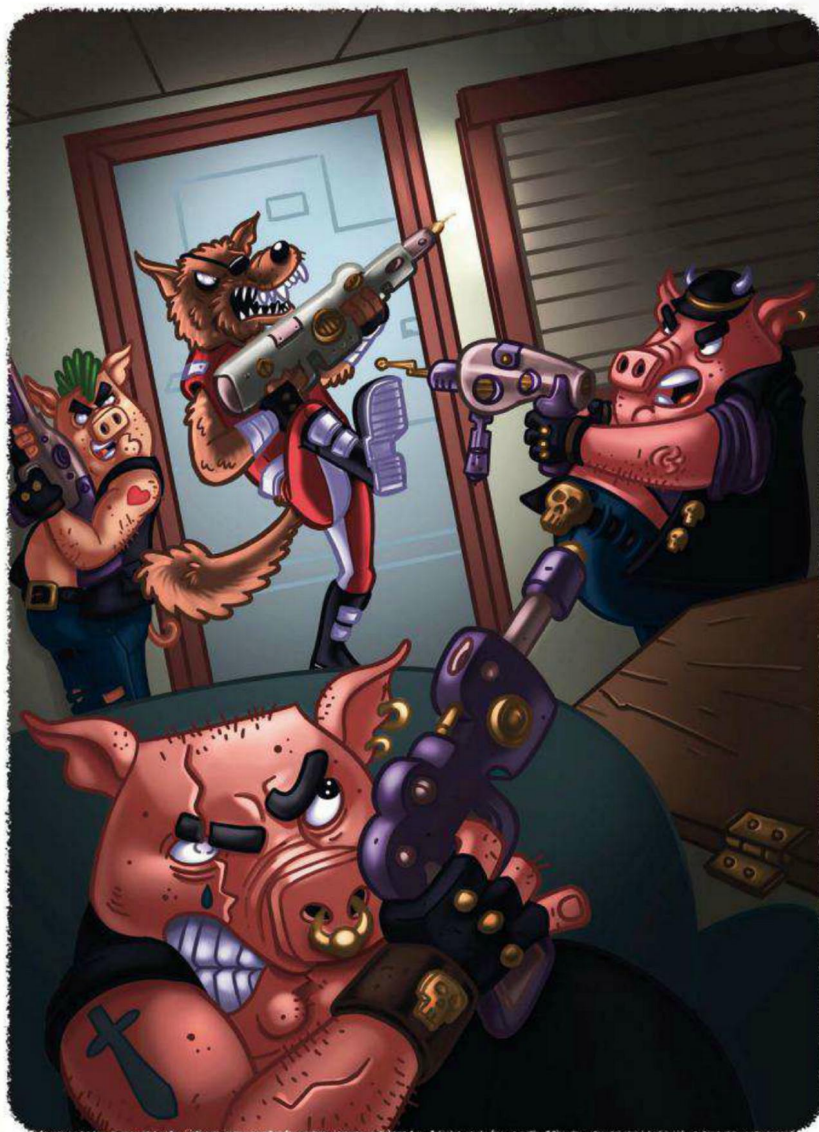


Vince made the right call on changing the costume in the final piece – it really needed those extra blues to break it up.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"With great attention to detail, Vince manages to create a very tragic and yet heroic scene. The lovely colours of the foliage and flowers offer a nice contrast to the struggle the protagonist experiences. It's a stunning fantasy portrait of himself as Tolkien's Boromir!"
Johanna Rupperecht (Iyraina)



Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/myfx



During the initial composition stage, perspective and horizon lines were the main things to consider.

MYFX TITLE: Once Upon a Time
WINNER: William Palacio (evil-robot2)
GALLERY: www.bit.ly/ifx-evil-robot2
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx-323



"The theme of the challenge was to give a fairy tale a sci-fi makeover, and for me, the funniest part of making this image was the story that popped into my head. I wanted to flip around the roles of the characters in the classic tale of Three Little Pigs. So I envisioned the wolf as an intergalactic bounty hunter, with the three pigs being the last surviving members of a gang of punk-rock space pigs. The scene I've created depicts the moment the wolf comes to collect his dead or alive bounty."

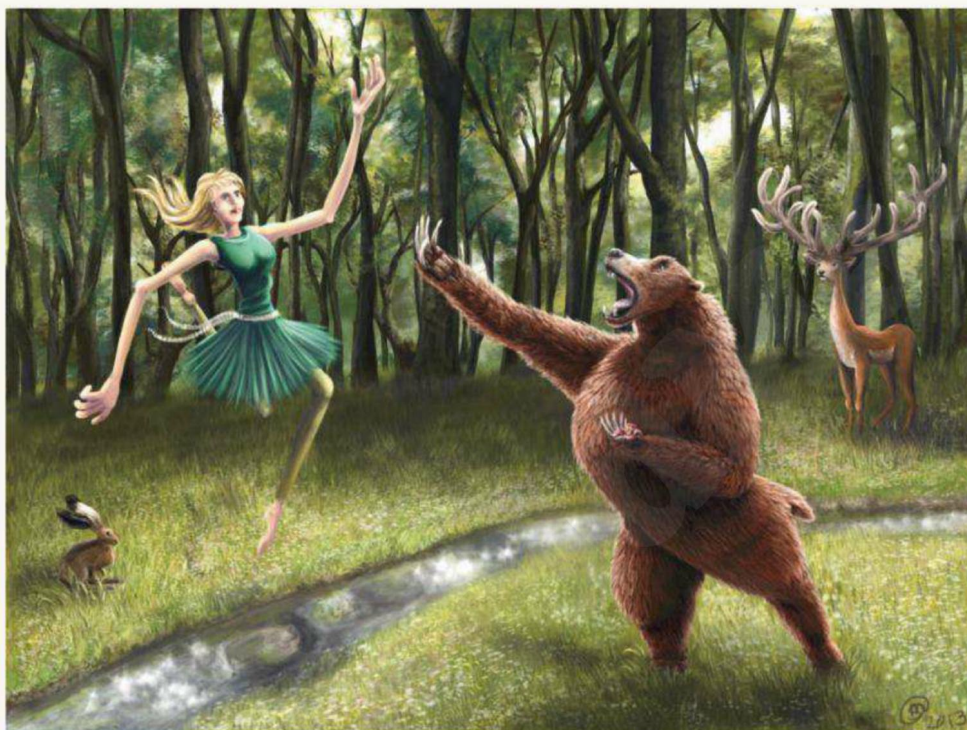


The composition sketch could pass for some kind of woodland opera scene!

MYFX TITLE: Anatomy Crime
WINNER: Marie Streeting (mercurycat)
GALLERY: www.bit.ly/ifx-mercurycat
ALL ENTRIES: www.bit.ly/myfx-322



"I'm still quite a novice at anatomy and often have difficulty with proportions and poses. So when I saw this challenge was about intentionally exaggerating anatomy, I thought 'How hard can it be?' Really difficult, actually! The challenge called for a person and an animal and at first there was no particular relationship between the two. I was asked about whether there was a story behind my characters, and so it became 'The Bear with No Growl,' a fairy tale story in which this would be the last scene. This matched the colourful illustration I was working on perfectly. I even wrote up the story in the finals thread."



Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Ian Dean, on ian.dean@futurenet.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK



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I can't print

Up to now I've ordered two digital issues of ImagineFX. I've ordered two non-digital issues as well, but they take almost four weeks to arrive, shipping from the UK to Germany, which is a bit slow. That's why I would prefer digital issues, but there's just one problem: printing seems to be disabled. Is it just my computer? I would like to have some pages printed out for easier reference. Thanks in advance for your help!

Hennig Ulla, Facebook

Ian replies: I'm glad you like the digital editions, Hennig – we're trying to improve them all the time. As you say, they mean we can get ImagineFX into the hands of readers around the world very quickly. As for printing, the iPad edition does support printing, although you may need a compatible model.

Thanks for the help

I just purchased the latest magazine and it's great! You guys/girls have been fantastic in helping me develop my concept art in prep for my games design and development degree and I love your tips and artwork. Thanks all!

Al Johanson, Facebook

Ian replies: Glad to hear from you, Al. More importantly I'm pleased some of the advice and techniques we've printed over the years have helped you in your career.

Final countdown

Can't wait to see the 100th issue! I love ImagineFX Magazine.

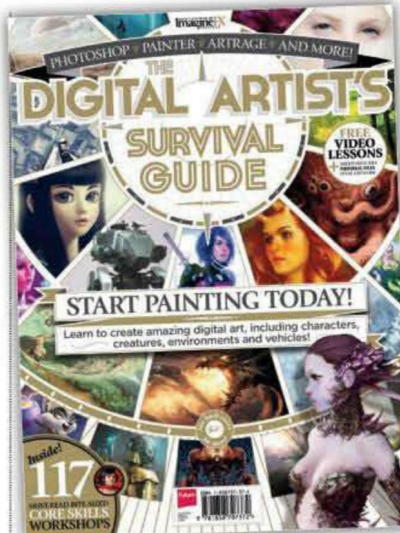
Luca Thomas, Facebook

Need to know the basics...

You guys are my favourite magazine! I love every issue and go out of my way to get the newest one. I was wondering, though: have you ever thought of doing an issue



ImagineFX iPad editions do support printing (with compatible models) so readers can read them on paper if they wish.



The Digital Artist's Survival Guide, which features guides to Photoshop, Painter and more, is on sale now.

completely dedicated to the absolute beginner? Basic skills and concepts applicable to a new digital media artist. Just a suggestion. Love you guys! Keep up the good work.

James Leland, via email

Ian replies: We try to offer something for all readers and all skill levels. If you're completely new perhaps dip into the Core Skills tutorial on page 77 or our Artist Q&A section, from page 32. We'll be doing more beginner tutorials in the coming issues, so keep an eye out. Alternatively, look for our latest special edition: The Digital Artist's Survival Guide on sale now. This features a learner's guide to Photoshop, Painter, SketchBook Pro and PaintTool SAI.

Keep 'em coming

Thanks for a great creature issue! And what an amazing cover by Simon Dominic, who is one of my favourite artists! Please give us more of this type of thing.

Mark Daniels, via email

Silent film

I've been reading ImagineFX for two years, and while I love the magazine to bits I have a small problem with the video tutorials: why are they silent? It's great to follow what artists are doing, but I'd also like to hear what they think and hear them explain their ideas. It's a small gripe with what's one of the most inspiring magazines I've read.

Maggie Jones, via email

Ian replies: Video is always hard to do. We have artists from all around the world and often English isn't their first language. Furthermore, to paint and talk at once can be tough. We're looking at ways to improve our video, with audio being one area. What else would readers like to see? Shorter video or long, epic runs of an artist's workflow?



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 98?

We've still got a few copies, but you need to move fast! See page 49 for details on how to get hold of one.



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Stay classy ImagineFX

So... I bought issue one. I loved it. It was the first magazine I'd read cover to cover that thoroughly. Ever. I subscribed. I've been subscribed for nearly the whole 100 issues and I have them all. I treasure them. I've no desire to go digital because the experience of reading a paper magazine is more than words. It's emotion. It's smell. It's tangibility.

Your mag has kept me enthused for so long, and although like many I'm time-poor and well past my chance to focus on deep learning for a career in art, my doodles are something I've always had and always will, and with ImagineFX's help they'll keep getting better.

The best ImagineFX cover? The black Frazetta cover. No point trying to upstage him with a homage and a brave move from a sales point of view. It was fitting and respectful.

Thanks for staying classy. And thanks for being the best art mag in the world.

Richard McIlrath, via email

Ian replies: Thanks for writing in Richard, and for staying with us since issue one. Every issue we make is a great deal of fun, so hopefully that resonates with you and the rest of the ImagineFX readers. I'm pleased you liked the Frazetta cover, too. Being able to give subscribers alternative and unique covers has always been something we're proud of. Stay classy yourself!



Subscribers always get unique covers, whether it's text-free artwork or new covers altogether. Find out more on page 30.

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Illustration, Photoshop

3D and 2D concept art

"Along with designing concepts, I'm

also capable of working on storyboards,

matte paintings and 3D renderings," he

says. "My goal was to originally become

an actor, but as I grew older,

I realized that wasn't the path for me."

An avid student of the craft, Dong

graduated from the Pasadena Art Center

College of Design in 2003, before

continuing on to study at the University

School of Visual Effects, graduating in

2005. "My next goal will be to try and

make a film of my own," he says.

ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Competition Entry: "You're not

just a case of David 10 and

Charlie Character Design! You find out

more about these two great books, go

to www.fantasyartmagazine.com.

Emma's kindle

10:32

Wi-Fi

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The FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX panel

Sam Carr



Sam is a full-time freelance illustrator from England currently working for Wizards of the Coast and Applibot, as well as other private clients.

www.samcarr.net

Jonathan Standing



Jonathan is a concept artist and illustrator from England. He lives and works in Ontario, Canada and is working on Syfy's Defiance.

www.jonathanstanding.com

Mark Molnar



Mark is a concept and visual development artist. He's busy doing freelance work for international film, game and animation companies.

www.markmolnar.com

Mélanie Delon



Mélanie is a freelance fantasy illustrator. She works as a cover artist for several publishing houses, and on her personal artbook series.

melaniedelon.com

Manon Delacroix



Manon is a busy freelance illustrator who specialises in high fantasy, horror and portraiture. Werewolves are her favourite.

www.artbymanon.com

Mikaël Léger



French concept artist Mikaël is a freelancer in the games industry. He also illustrates RPG books and is working on a comic, Atomic Cowboys.

www.ConceptArtist.eu

Tony Foti



Tony is a US freelance illustrator who contributes to D&D, and Fantasy Flight Games' Star Wars and The Lord of the Rings lines.

www.tonyfotiart.com

Question

Only using a costume over basic body shapes, how would you create a realistic character painting?

Declan Dean, England

Finishing involves texturing my materials, filling out shadow areas with more form, and zooming in to render intricate design elements.

Answer Sam replies



A lot of people become attached to the idea that they need to learn anatomy inside and out before they can start creating the figure paintings that they want to make. A lot of people become so obsessed with this idea that all their characters look like they stepped out of an anatomy text book. This idea will only lead you to painting all your characters naked with no skin, to show off all your muscle knowledge.

An overall eye for basic shapes and silhouettes is far more

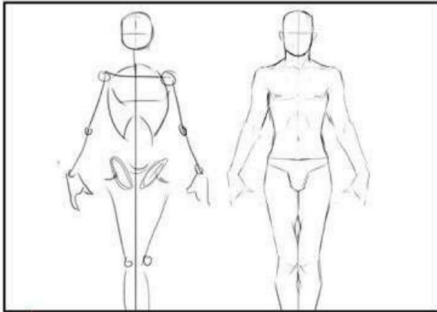
By this point you should have pinned down everything in terms of the outfit's colours and also have the form reading correctly.



valuable for painting characters, especially because drawing the figure perfectly beforehand will make you less likely to want to 'ruin' it with a costume over it, hindering your designs.

In the three-step walkthrough I'll be exploring just how little anatomy you need to know to paint a character. I'll begin with showing the mannequin upon which we'll base the design, looking at designs that cover the character's muscles, and then adding values and colour to give it that realistic look.

Step-by-step: Quickly paint a fantasy character



1 Instead of thinking about muscles, consider the proportions and gesture. Learning the basic setup of the overall figure can be helpful – see Figure Drawing for All It's Worth by Andrew Loomis. With this, we can set up a believable figure with no muscle knowledge, just by achieving the right frame and block-in.



2 Try to see how many outfits obstruct the view of the muscles underneath. You'll begin to see that most of them, bar the skimpy bikini fantasy outfits, cover up a large amount of the flesh beneath. Here is a classic knight and mage attire, drawn over in red to show you how they follow the overall form of the body.



3 I put the lines from step 2 on to a Multiply layer and block in some values underneath. I then follow this by some colours on a Soft Light layer. Think more about the overall form of the outfit at this point, trying to bear in mind areas where cloth shows more of the shape of the body, such as the shoulders.

Question

Can you help me create an original boss character who appears at the end of a game?

Adelina Gillo, Italy



I envisage that the player needs to destroy the three magical chains to get rid of the beast and have a crack at its master.

Answer

Jonathan replies



I'd say that if you're working either in a video game studio, or even as a

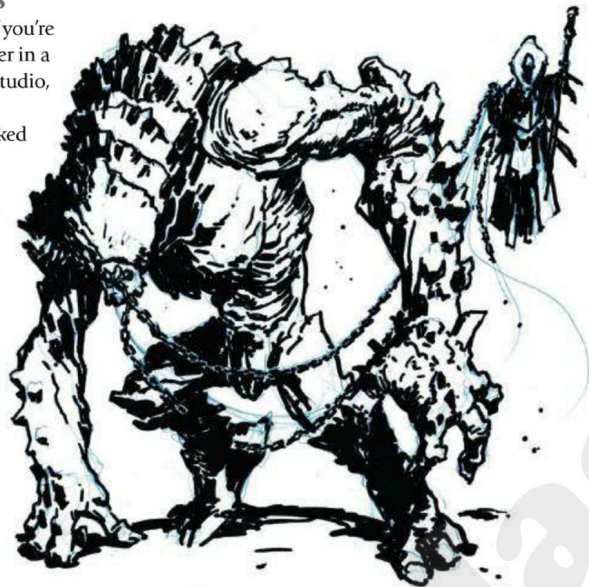
freelancer and you're tasked with designing a game's 'end boss', if your game designers are doing their job then you should be handed a specific list of criteria to follow.

Game design and concept art often work hand in hand. It's your job as the artist, however exhaustive or clever the design is, to breathe life into it and add visual quality and information that make the character both functional and memorable for the player.

Where visual design and game design really hold hands is in the function of the design and using visual cues to communicate to the player what their enemy is about and, most likely, a way to defeat them. The function of the character's behaviour should be visible to the player and legible in whatever context you have at the end of the game.

Boss characters often employ a 'tell' or some kind of animation sequence or movement that helps signal their mode of attack to the player. It's the responsibility of animators to make this motion great, but it's generally the job of the designer and concept artist to generate the idea in the first place.

After completing my initial concept, I decide that the design isn't special enough for an end-of-game encounter, so I add two more heads to push it a little.



My design criteria here is straightforward: have a collaborative attack by two characters and make one of them huge, relative to the playable character.

Artist's secret

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION!

I thought the beast could have a charge attack, where the 'tell' for the player is that the three heads come together to form one shape before the beast charges. The more your design supports the function of the character, the better.

Question

How can I paint different skin types, to vary my characters?

Franz Hilbert, Austria

Answer

Mark replies



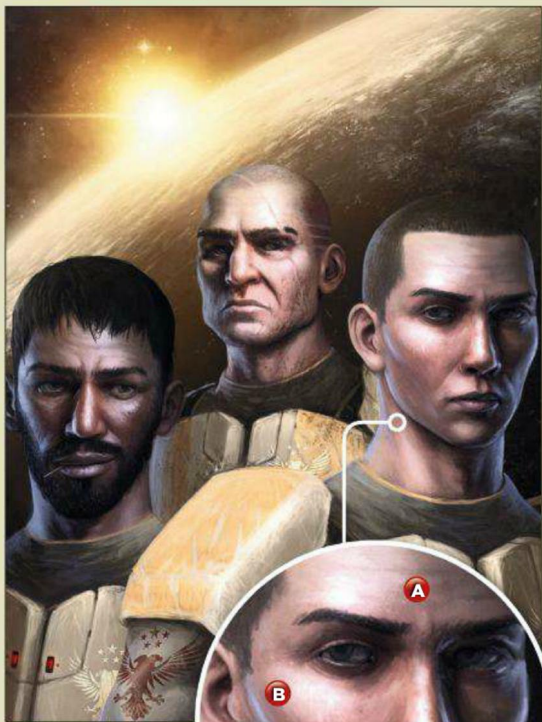
Before painting different skin types, consider the backgrounds of your characters. Depending on their geographical origin and ethnicity, your figures are going to have different features and skin colours.

Varying the origins of your imagined characters isn't just going to make your designs more versatile – it's also going to make them believable.

The key for this is to understand skin and its function. Its colour ranges from pinkish-white to the darkest brown, and has evolved to regulate the UV radiation that penetrates our bodies. The colour is determined by the amount of melanin in our skin cells: people with darker skin have more of this pigment in their skin. The skin colour of people with lighter skin comes from the semi-translucency of the skin itself, while the blue and pink tints originate from the blood vessels that are close to the skin's surface.

Although certain core skin characteristics are commonplace, such as the olive-tinted skin colour of characters with Hispanic origins, humans have so many minor variations within each skin type that there's no quick solution for painting skins. The key is to study the various ethnic groups and match them to the imagined back story of your characters.

I've painted this image for a book cover. The goal was to show the different backgrounds and origins of the team of soldiers. The easiest way to achieve this was to vary their skin types and main facial features.



The book's main hero has European and Hispanic origins. I use a mix of olive colour and tanned skin (A) with pink tints (B), but also add some darks and purples around the mouth (C) to suggest North African roots.

Question

I can't seem to paint patterned scales – do you any advice?

Paul Smith, England

Answer

Mikaël replies

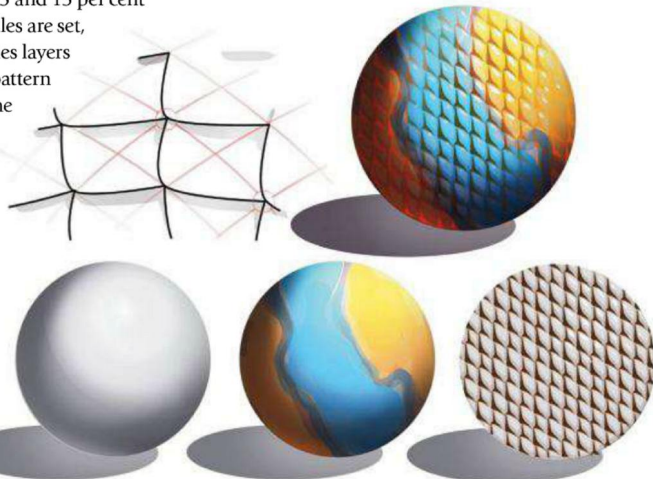


I paint the patterns first, then draw the scales on top using separate layers. I think of scales as texture information, and

focus on forms and the colour patterns. Once these are established, I draw a grid guideline that follows the creature's shapes, and use it to draw the scales' outlines and their individual shadows using a neutral colour at 50 per cent saturation.

I then play around with copies of that scales layer at different opacities and blending modes, and use a Layer Mask to soften the edges and blend elements. I then build the volume of the scales by painting the light using one or two Screen blending layers set at between 5 and 15 per cent opacity. Once the scales are set, I paint under the scales layers to adjust the colour pattern and make it follow the scale shapes. Finally, I'll go over the top of everything, adding details and highlights.

I first establish the volumes and colours patterns, and then overlay the scale texture on top of it, simulating small displacements on the surface.



Scales overlap, so I connect the start and end of each scale to the middle of the previous curve.



Question

How do you paint an old fantasy book, like you'd see in The Lord of the Rings?

Dorothy Arnold, US

Answer

Manon replies

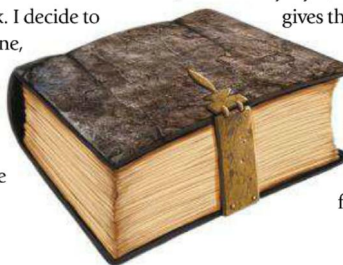


At the risk of sounding like a stuck record, search online for 'Ancient Book'. This will bring up images of beautiful old tomes, which are great for reference. I take a selection of these to work from and then sketch out my own book. I decide to have a brass clasp on mine, to give it that sense of something important being inside – perhaps it's a magic book...

Once I've got the shape right I start to render the

colour and add some texture. You can find all sorts of great free textures online and they help with bringing a digital image to life and giving the surface of the book that aged look. I apply the texture and use an

Overlay layer, because it's the one that gives the most interesting finish, and then neaten up the edges and paint over it so that it's not just a straight cut and paste. To finish I spend time on the pages, making them feel old and yellowed.



Question

Please tell me how to paint the glorious light that shines through some trees?

Phil Thompson, US



Here's the base of my forest, after adding the light. I don't want to spend time working up each leaf and tree - I prefer to paint a general light source first and then add more light on specific areas of the painting.

Answer

Mélanie replies



To get the light working correctly in this particular scene, I need to start with a good base - something neutral in terms of lighting, so nothing too dark or light. This will make it easier to construct an interesting scene.

I usually keep my forest on different layers: foreground, background, and one for the mid-ground, because the depth of field means the light won't look the same in those areas. The background is usually more desaturated than the foreground.

Once the base part is complete, I determine where the light comes from. In this image it'll be from the left and in the background, so the foreground will remain in the shadows.

When you paint this kind of scene, the light must be dynamic, otherwise the image will look flat and won't appeal to the viewer. I also think about

the mood and atmosphere that I want present in the scene. I'm going for something mysterious and enchanting so the light will be more diffuse, verging on the unreal. I experiment with different layer modes, to achieve some interesting colour variations in the light.

Because I've kept my forest on different layers I can easily add some rays of light between the trees and foliage. These rays will also interact with the ground, so the grass and plants must be suitably lit, too. This will increase the depth of field and make the forest look more realistic. I also

saturate some areas of the leaves on the top of the trees. They become almost transparent and I must add some bright greens all around them to render this effect.

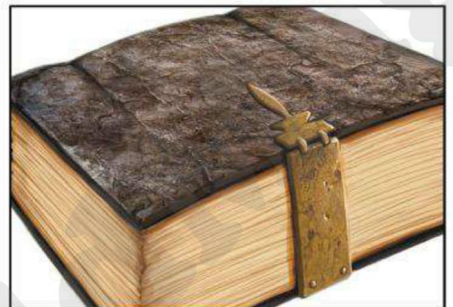
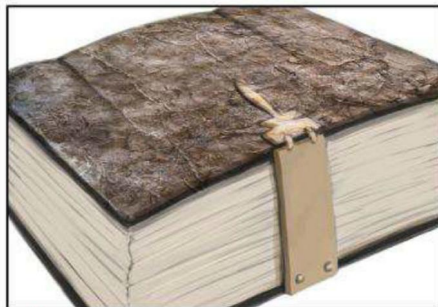
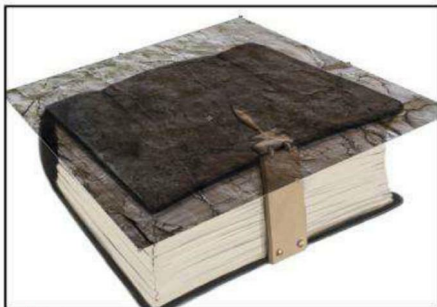


Artist's secret

THE LIGHT BRUSH

To create rays of light with plenty of texture I use this custom brush. It consists of wild random brush strokes, with very low opacity and jitter set to Pen Pressure. Try painting in soft Light or screen Layer mode.

Step-by-step: Unearth an ancient tome



1 To create a great, grimy looking old book, find a suitably grungy or rough texture by searching online. There are many textures out there, but make sure that you download the free kind! Using Photoshop's Distort tool in Edit> Transform>Distort, you can fit it to the top of your book.

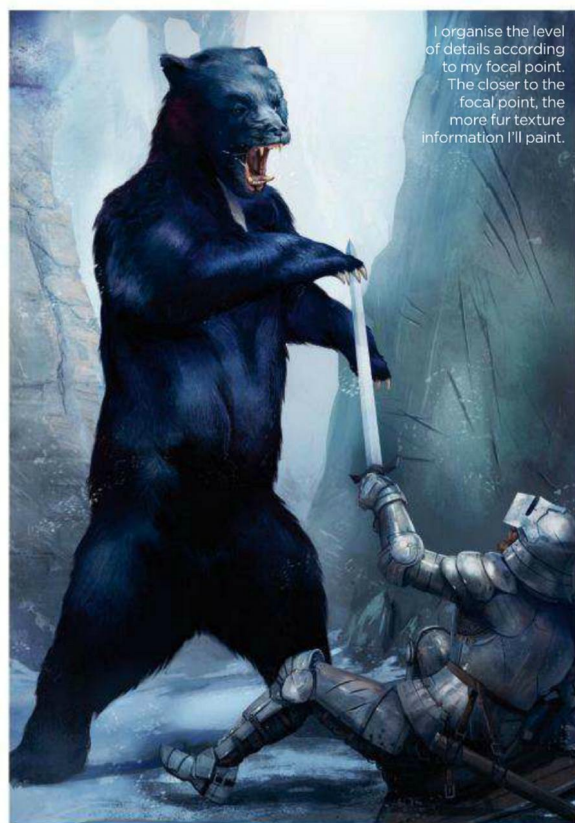
2 For the next stage you need to spend a bit of time playing around with Photoshop's opacity options. I choose Overlay, which gives my chosen texture a very old and dusty look. I flatten this to the cover and then paint over it to make the layer blend convincingly with the rest of the book.

3 Finally I render the rest of the book until it has lovely yellowed pages, some of them perhaps ripped and hanging out. I then make the brass clasp look a little aged and worn to keep with the ancient aesthetic of the book. I decide that I'll keep some parts shiny, while others will be scratched and marked.

Question

What's the best way to go about painting black fur using Photoshop?

Percy Nungesser, France



Answer

Mikaël replies



Using bristle-type brushes, I paint big strokes that follow the volumes and fur direction.

Then, without flattening established volumes, I use scattering-type texture brushes to blend elements and give the illusion of fur. Once I'm happy with the overall shape I blend the outer edges with the background using the Mixer Brush tool.

I paint using values and brightness to define volumes. If you colour pick a black fur photo, you'll see that the darks range between two and 30 per cent brightness, and the light areas between 31 and 70 per cent. Highlights could be in the 80 per cent range.

Black fur is colourful, but the colour itself don't matter much as long as I'm consistent when keeping the temperature organised: cool colours in the light and warm in the shadows. This could be inverted depending on the overall colour scheme.

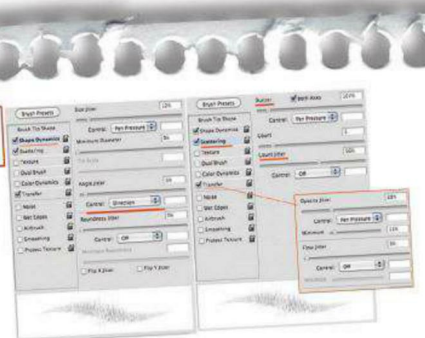
I make sure the saturation of each area is consistent with its respective brightness. Saturation will depend on the light situation. I go with a rather saturated fur on mine, but whatever the overall saturation you chose, you should stay consistent. Keep the shadow more saturated than the light. Basically, the darker the area, the more saturated it will be.



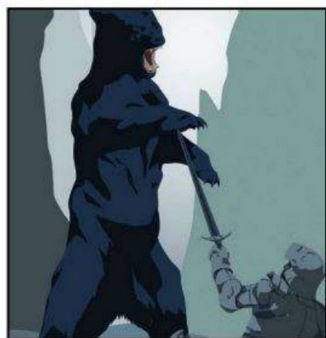
Artist's secret

CREATE A SCATTER FUR BRUSH

Draw a couple of hairs to use as a brush preset. Define the size and Opacity, set Scatter to pen pressure and the angle on the Direction setting. set Count jitter around 50 per cent, scatter on both axes around 100 per cent, and adjust the size, Angle and Opacity jitter.



Step-by-step: Illustrate a large, furry beast



1 I draw each element's silhouettes. For the base fur, I use a cool colour at around 60 per cent saturation and 25 per cent brightness. On a new Layer that uses the silhouette layer as a Clipping Mask, I draw the shapes of the shadows. I keep my edges sharp, and think about the light direction and how it falls on the overall volumes and the subject's anatomy.



2 I add some colour variations to the silhouette and then with Photoshop's default Chalk brush I start modelling the volumes and soften the shadow layer's edges. If the edges are created by a cast shadow they'll remain sharp; however, the form shadow's edges will be soft. To avoid losing the initial shadow shape I soften the edges using a Layer Mask.



3 With the big default Chalk brush, I start painting. Ignoring details, I use broad strokes to model the volumes, following the hair's direction. I also refine the silhouette. Because of my overall colour scheme, I use cool colours in the light and warm ones in the shadows. Black fur is actually quite colourful: the darker the colour, the more saturated it'll be. I don't use pure black.



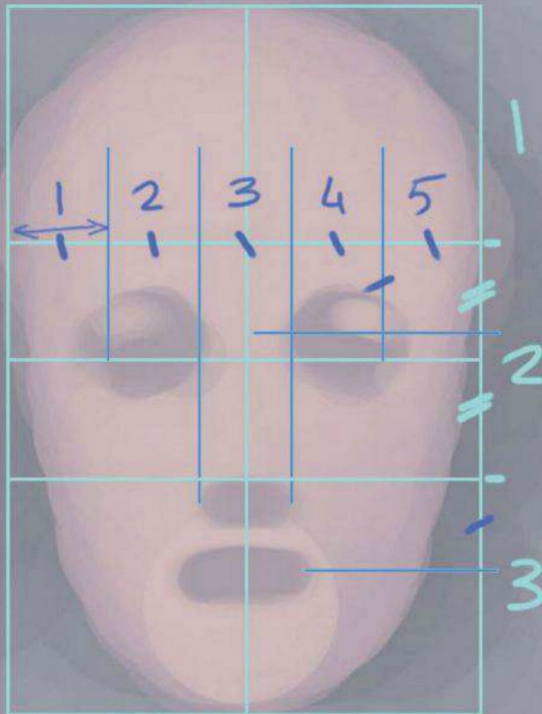
4 I'm nearly finished, and so take care not to kill established volumes. I use a Chalk brush and a small Bristle brush (1 and 2) to refine details, and some fur texture brushes (3 and 4) to blend things together. With the Mixer Brush Tool and a Fan brush, I blend the silhouette edges with the background. Finally, I use adjustment layers to unify colours and push the contrasts.

Question

Can you show me how to use the Golden Ratio in a portrait painting?

Lizzy Ball, England

This is the basic grid that can help with the base of the face. I'd advise putting it on a separate layer.



Answer

Mélanie replies



The Golden Ratio has its basis in mathematics, and can be complicated to understand if you approach it numerically. Yet for an artist to use it in their workflow, you simply have to remember a few rules. Start by noting that the face is divided into three equal parts: the forehead; the eyes and nose; and the mouth and chin. To depict the nose and eye size correctly, split the width of the face into five equal parts. The distance you obtain will be that between the bottom of the nose and the middle of the mouth.

These are the basics of the Golden Ratio, and are all you need to know when drawing a portrait. When you have these guidelines in place over your sketch, you can continue with the facial features and volumes.

Having said this, I usually don't stick all that closely to these divine proportions, because a face is rarely perfect and the lines tend to hold

back the imagination. So I recommend using and applying the rules on a separate layer at the start of the sketch, just to get the face right, and then turning that layer off and carry on drawing.



Now it's time to have fun with the character. I find perfect proportions make for a boring result, so I always like to add flaws that result in a more realistic portrait.

Question

How do I depict hard and soft surfaces in the same image?

Hisashi Yoshimoto, Japan

Answer

Manon replies



When painting hard edges, the easiest way is to use either the Pen or Ellipse tool (choose the Ellipse tool if you're doing round edges). I use the Ellipse tool for the top of the helmet and the Polygonal Lasso tool for the snowboard.

I sketch out my idea with basic shapes, then colour it all in greyscale to get all the values right. I paint the yeti separate to the helmet and the board, which enables me to keep all the sharp edges intact. Placing the goggles, helmet and board on separate layers gives you greater control over these elements.

For the yeti's fur I use a fur brush to produce the overall feel. Then on top of that I add more individual hair strands to make it look less uniform. I finish with the helmet and goggles, making sure to keep my edges crisp and shining brightly.



I use a fur brush from the Nagel series, which you can find online, to start my Yeti and then over the top of that I add individual strands of hairs.

Question

Can you give me a starting point for painting a fantasy punk band?

Oliver Jarvis, Australia



Use the elements of fantasy gaming to explore as many possibilities as you can for each part of the design.



Why not make their instruments analogues for their weapons? Enchanted drumsticks and a guitar that's literally an axe will get the ball rolling.

Answer

Tony replies



Like most illustrations, this one should really begin with a story. Unfortunately, I don't have a machine that produces time and/or money, so for brevity's sake I'm going to make this a two-person operation: the classic team-up of white mage and fighter, just so I know they're ready for anything the tour can throw at them.

Punk rock is all about challenging the mainstream. Since these people are going to be members of the counter culture, it's only fair we reverse some stereotypes. The female lead works well as the fighter, and our drummer will be in charge of healing. Costuming, hair, makeup, tattoos and atmosphere can all be used to reinforce the fantasy aspects of the illustration.

Question

Can you tell me how to show the scale of an immense, underwater monster?

Ulymus Collins, Scotland

Answer

Jonathan replies



First, I establish the relationship between the monster and my field of view. The more space the creature occupies, the larger it will seem, particularly if it's only partially encompassed by the image. It's vital to have repeating objects in perspective, especially recognisable ones. The human figure is particularly useful in this regard and so I stagger the three figures in the image to give a sense of depth. The submarine wedged in the creature's teeth acts also as a guide for scale. Because most viewers have a fair idea of the size of a submarine relative

to a person, the vehicle articulates how far the divers are away from the creature and thus its overall size.

The ocean is filled with flotsam and particulate matter, and so I use spatter brushes to add this opacity to the water using different sizes also helps with scale. I hint at the surface of the water above the scene by having indistinct shadows falling on the creature, which helps with the drama of the scene, too.

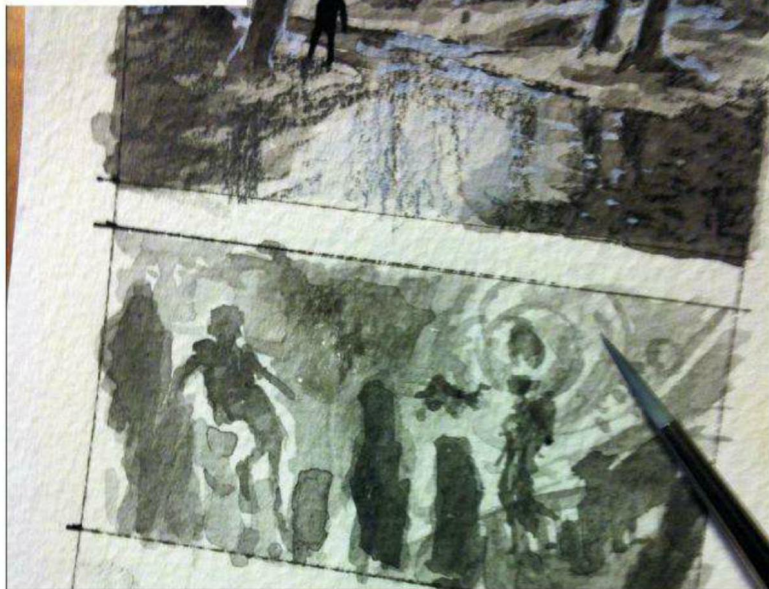
The creature is basically a goosefish. Having intrinsically aquatic biology for your creature helps make it believable, however fantastic.

WATCH THIS!

www.bit.ly/99-seabeast



I begin by making a tiny 2x1-inch watercolour sketch. I'm already thinking about how the water will affect light in the scene.



Question

How do edges and sharpness affect the look of the face?

Jenny Timberly, US



Exaggerated edges and curves can clearly define the age and gender of a face.

Answer

Sam replies



A common mistake is to make female faces too masculine, and male faces too feminine. So for this answer, I paint two quick faces that showcase contrasting techniques. One is an older-looking, rough, masculine face. I employ lots of hard edges and sharp shapes to accentuate his look. The other is a young beautiful woman, in which I lose lots of edges and make the most of curves to bring out her feminine features.

My first step for each face is to construct some landmarks for where the skull lies. From there on, the process diverges. On the male face, I play up the stiffness of the initial construction marks and don't venture off too much from the skull shape. For the female face, I go for a V-shaped 'anime' chin. Most people tend to overcompensate on the chin for women, and I find that exaggerating this small chin from the start helps. For the male face, I keep my value transitions more separate than the female face. I also use pointed triangular edges for my light and shadow shapes, and go for long, smooth curves on the female.



Here's an example of how using hard straight lines (left) instead of soft curves (right) can affect the overall beauty of a female face.



Artist's secret

THE BIG PICTURE

Don't work at full zoom and miss any mistakes! Zoom out or make use of Photoshop's Navigator window to see the composition and anything that doesn't read well from a distance.

Question

How do you go about creating variations for a game character?

Kate Yung, Malaysia

Answer

Tony replies



The key to a good character design is story. There are many ways to create variation, but every part you draw should tell the viewer more about who this person is. So it's important to know as much as possible about the people and world beforehand. Since we don't have a game to work on, let's throw together a basic story.

Rose Vermillion is the Captain of a Naval Space Research team sent to recover samples from a hostile alien world. When the ship's engines are compromised during atmospheric entry, Rose must survive the crash, rescue her crew and discover who was behind the sabotage before their nefarious plans come to fruition. Alright, now we've got something to work with!

This is a good time to list off some of the specifics of your character and the world they live in. Age, build, social class, current income, former income, family situation, previous jobs, upbringing, emotional maturity, strengths, weaknesses... anything you can think of. The more you understand about the character, the clearer your direction will be when creating costumes.

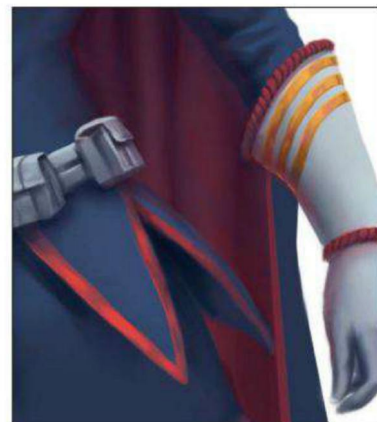
Research is the key to creativity, so look up as much as you can about historical customs and dress to get an idea of what direction you want to go in. Military uniforms, rank insignias, hair styles, fashion trends, old sci-fi movies, new sci-fi movies, avant-garde fashion designers (Jean Paul Gaultier is a great example) – soak it all up and prepare to design!



Next month
ON SALE: **16 August**
Use colour and light to give
an image a light, happy feel



There are countless ways you can design characters and their costumes, so your job is to decide which elements will best convey the story.



Taking care to paint the textures of different materials can be a great help to other people in the pipeline who'll be working with your design later on.

Artist's secret

JUST FLIP IT!

Flip the canvas periodically to give your brain something new to look at. The simple act of turning everything around will soon highlight any errors in the design that your eyes may have already become used to.



Step-by-step: Generate character concepts

- 1 Before diving into anything too complex, get the general idea down. Silhouettes enable you to grasp the feel of a character's design without wasting time on details. While you draw, focus on how



each shape feels like the person you're describing for the viewer. If you can tell what's going on from an outline, you're on the right path to a clear design.

- 2 Once you've collected several workable silhouettes, sketch them out. We're just focusing on costuming here, but you would basically use the same process for the model's physical appearance.



Rather than stressing out and overthinking it, try to have fun and let your subconscious fill in the details that are missing from the thumbnails.

- 3 Once I have a costume that feels right, it's time to come up with a colour scheme. Copy/Paste the chosen outfit a few times (I like to try out at least eight) around the canvas, create a layer below,



and just start painting under the lines. Figuring out what you like and don't like about each one will help you get closer to the right design.

Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you art-ache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at help@imaginefx.com or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.**



DEATHPACT ANGEL

Jason Chan produced this image for the Gatecrash expansion pack released this year. With its landscape size, it's also been used in posters.



20 years of **MAGIC** The Gathering®

In 1993 a new collectible card game was released. No one knew it then, but it would entice generations into a complex fantasy world and inspire the greatest fantasy artists working today...

Brad Rigney is carefully describing what makes Magic: The Gathering unique. As a life-long fan and player of the collectible card game (CCG), not to mention a phenomenally talented digital artist, his passion is palpable.

"Magic fans spend a lot of time with the cards in their hands – they get attached to them, they have memories associated with



each card in their deck," Brad says. "They may hate what a card does and dread seeing it played on the battlefield, or love a card and relish in the experience of slapping it down and saying 'eat it!' to their opponent."

Mirroring the company's history, the game's simple concept – players taking the role of Planeswalkers, moving through the Multiverse, battling other Planeswalkers with cards – becomes as multifaceted as the people that play it. There are thousands of cards to choose from, all with various powers and meaning, so your deck is unique. The game can be played with two people or 2,693, as in this year's Pro Tour.

"You get a lot of laughs and thrills in Magic games. Cards get flipped over and

the rush of victory or sting of defeat follows," says Brad, "and it can be your art that immediately broadcasts that. Players see the art and know what the card does."

A COLOURFUL PAST

It's been 20 years, and Magic: The Gathering is still the most popular CCG. It's morphed and shifted, expanded, embraced digital art, developed huge multi-tiered tournaments and changed scoring systems. There's also one other thing that makes it stand out.

"Magic was the first CCG to be released and it's never given up the advantages that head start gave it," says Peter Venters, an



art director who's been involved with Magic since the beginning. "CCGs survive through a thriving player base. If people can't find anyone to play a game with, they stop buying the cards and the game dies."

A strong tournament scene has been Magic's life source, keeping the fans engaged. It also helps, says Pete, that the people behind the scenes know what they're doing. "One of the secrets to releasing a CCG is that by the time you have a set released, the next set better be on the way to the printers ➡

"Cards get flipped over and the rush of victory or sting of defeat follows, and it can be your art that broadcasts that"

All images © Wizards of the Coast LLC



SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

Sometimes even suspicious parents can't get in the way of a child's passion for playing fantasy games...

Jason Chan has been a playing fan of Magic: The Gathering since high school, even though the game was unceremoniously banned because "some parents complained that the school was allowing black magic to be practised."

Jason was not put off, and a few years of hard graft later he was creating art for the game. "My first two

cards were done simultaneously. They were Nimbus Maze and Pact of Negation in the Future Sight expansion in 2007." The artist was 24 years old. "I definitely think that my work has changed since then," says Jason. "My working process is completely different, for one. I'm my own worst critic, so I'm always trying to improve my work."

PACT OF NEGATION

Jason Chan's first card for Magic displays his budding talent – although the artist feels he's come a long way since then.



DARK CONFIDANT

Popular artist Scott M Fischer turns completely to digital software to produce this charming chap.

➤➤ and the following set should be at the art assignment stage."

MAKING MAGIC

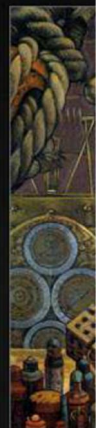
Creating artwork for Magic is tricky. You're tasked with conveying a character, a skill, or perhaps an evocative environment. And that art will then be shrunk to cover a fraction of a playing card. Yet people like John Stanko, Donato Giancola and Scott M Fischer jump at the chance of a Magic commission.

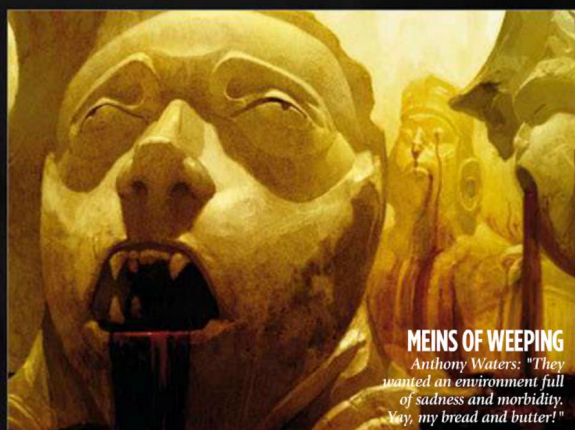
VAULT SKIRGE

Here's Brad Rigney's first card for the New Phyrexia expansion. A 'common' card, it introduced another recognisable talent to the franchise.



What's the process? "It's a secret," says Jason Chan, a Magic player since high school. "A very well-planned secret." Proceedings are





MEINS OF WEEPING

Anthony Waters: "They wanted an environment full of sadness and morbidity. Yay, my bread and butter!"



fittingly clandestine. The artist receives an email with the image description. "This is what a lot of fans don't seem to know. I don't know a thing about what a card actually does until I see the finished thing," he says.

In fact, the names of characters usually change before they're printed. "This prevents me, or anyone snooping through my studio, from getting any real information of the game," he says. This may sound paranoid, but you have to remember that this is a multi-million dollar franchise, and Magic – or its parent company Wizards of the Coast – doesn't want to give the competition an inch.



HANNA, SHIP'S NAVIGATOR

Terese Nielsen returns to a character, Hanna, that she's painted before, this time with the aim of making her appealing. Job done!

BURDEN OF GUILT

This is the follow-up to John Stanko's Gruesome Discovery card, where a wife finds her husband dead. Here, years later, she's unable to move on.



VETERAN PLANESWALKER

Magic: The Gathering's story is inevitably tied up with various artists' stories. Artists such as Peter Venters...

British artist Peter Venters was on his first trip to America in 1993, when he met the Wizard's of the Coast guys at the Philadelphia Comic Con. A friendly chat ensued, and within a month he was producing card art for the packs Antiquities, Legends and The Dark.

"I've done over 280 pieces for Magic over 17 years," he tells us, "in traditional

and digital mediums, and I've got my favourites in both mediums. In traditional I'd go for Megatog (good comedy value), while in digital it'd be Lys Alana Huntcaller, because I went to town on the textures for that. I used Corel Painter watercolour layers to create stippling to simulate motes of golden light in a magical forest."

MEGATOG

The Magic art of the 1990s had more room for humour. Below right, Peter proves he's a digital dab hand



For Brad, a Magic commission is a chance to embody not the card character, but the card player: "I ask myself, who would play this card and why? What is the fantasy? I get into character with it; try to place myself in the gamer's head and tap into the fantasy. Really the only bridge there – regardless of play style – is the art."

"Magic wouldn't have been nearly the success it's become without the art"

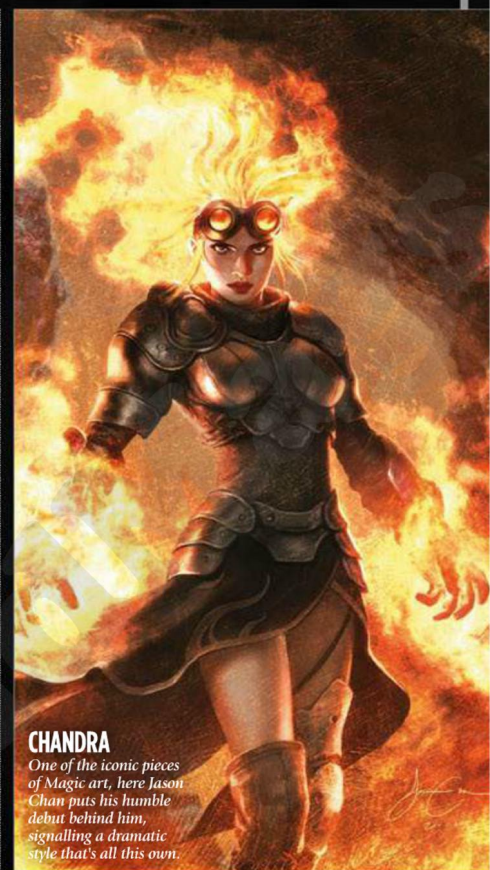
Surprisingly, the importance of art in the game is a topic that splits artist opinion, and changes depending on the era you're talking about. Anthony S Waters has worked on Wizards of the Coast's



Dungeons & Dragons and Magic since 1997, and he's clear on the point. "Magic wouldn't have been nearly the success it's become without the art, but that said, the mechanics are distinct from the art. You don't need the art to play the game."

TO THE VICTOR, THE SPOILS

The game today, like the artwork, has changed fundamentally since 1993. The first winner of a Magic Pro Tour got a trophy and a handshake. Today they'll ➔



CHANDRA

One of the iconic pieces of Magic art, here Jason Chan puts his humble debut behind him, signalling a dramatic style that's all this own.



SERRA AVENGER

Scott M. Fischer's most popular image is an oil and mixed media piece on canvas, released this year for Time Spiral.



RAMAZ

Brad moves on from killer flying insect creatures to crazy-eyed cave men with this fella.

get around \$40,000. "The evolution of the game has affected the fan base," says Anthony. "Magic had greater casual appeal when it first appeared, but it's been shaped since then to meet the desires of a very competitive audience, and that audience isn't nearly as interested in the art as in days

"The list of great artists who have participated in making the Magic: The Gathering cards is so impressive"

TREASURED FIND

Jason Chan produces silky smooth skin textures and dramatic lighting to bring this card to life.



past. I've found mostly older players like the art and game equally. Younger players are more engaged by the game itself."

Stephan Martinière doesn't see it like that: "I would say the art is what makes

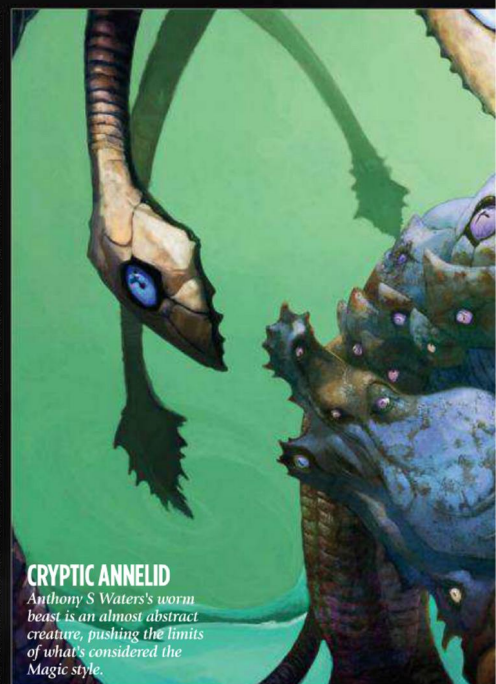


Magic so popular and enduring. The list of great artists who have participated in making the cards is so impressive. The trading market of these cards and the high values on some of them has also added to the popularity of the game."

"Depends on who you talk to," offers Brad. "There are some gamers who can take or leave the art. Then there are gamers who make decks actually based on it. You can play the game so many ways."

One certainty is that the tiny image of the card translates, whether creating a buzz on an art forum, adorning magazine pages, or being sold for a stack of cash.

Christopher Rush's Black Lotus, one of the



CRYPTIC ANNELID

Anthony S. Waters's worm beast is an almost abstract creature, pushing the limits of what's considered the Magic style.

most iconic Magic cards, sells for thousands of dollars.

EVOLUTION IN ART

In the early days artists worked for relatively small sums. "The art fees for artists were so small," says Pete, "that Wizards included stock in the company to help entice artists to work on the game!"

That all changed. Art became increasingly sophisticated and an



CASTING A SPELL

Terese Nielsen shares the original commission for the Silverskin Armor card art, and how she brought the magic...

1 After pondering the brief description I received from Magic, I do a few very rough thumbnail sketches. I then find and shoot the appropriate reference for my idea, and ask my photographer friend Scott Harben to take some photos of Jamie Reed-Kovac, the model and former American Gladiator. After that I create a rough composite of some of the elements using Photoshop.



2 I then draw on top of this with tracing paper parchment, adding additional design elements. This sketch is then submitted to the art director for approval.

Art description

Title: Flesh Foil
Colour: None (artefact)
Location: Your choice
Action: We see a female blue-aligned human (neurok) in the process of "installing" her magical armour. The armour consists of form-fitting chrome pieces that extend tendrils of metal into her flesh that connect with her bones (bloodlessly).
Focus: The chrome armour with its endoskeleton anchor points.
Mood: Let those filthy Phyrexian try to pry *this* off me.



3 After the sketch is approved I print it out, wet-stretch it and begin painting. The final size of this piece is 9.75x7-inches. It's painted on Epson Velvet Fine Art paper using acrylic, oil, ink, gold/silver leaf and embossing powders.

4 Although much of the art for Magic can look great blown up across two magazine pages, their natural habitat is a few inches on a playing card... and they still look great.



VECORDIAN PRIMORDIAL

Another card, another style: Stephan Martinière swaps sci-fi landscapes for this hellish fantasy vision.



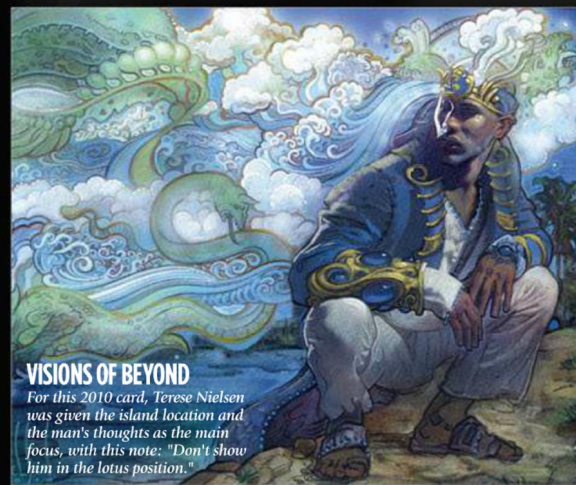
increasing familiarity with the game and how the cards looked when printed helped artists push the boundaries of card-scale compositions. More story-driven card assignments, style-guides and full world-building followed. A more honed product meant more revenue, which resulted in higher art fees, and that enabled artists to work longer on pieces. A cycle of success.

Magic's look therefore evolved at a much faster rate than Dungeons & Dragons, ➔



BOG MAN

Anthony S Waters has produced around 110 cards for Magic since 1993, although his first batch never saw the light of day because the project was shelved.



VISIONS OF BEYOND

For this 2010 card, Terese Nielsen was given the island location and the man's thoughts as the main focus, with this note: "Don't show him in the lotus position."



THRILL-KILL ASSASSIN

Tyler Jacobson's carnival killer, is gleefully psychotic, a common trait among many of his Magic pieces.

SENSE OF SCALE

Scott M Fischer's art gets the Magic card treatment. Even at two-thirds of the card's surface area, the character still jumps out at the player.

while always existing in the leftfield of traditional fantasy art. It's a flavour that has even sustained the massive streamlining of its look and feel in 1997. "We've had eight or nine distinct settings for Magic since art director Jeremy Cranford began pushing for every set to represent a standalone world in 1997," says Anthony.

Digital software changed things, too. "I'd say that it's put the art on steroids," says Brad. Quicker turnarounds meant more commissions, and more money made to pay the increasingly sought-after art superstars.

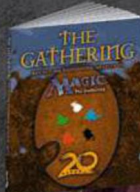
MAGIC: THE ART BOOK

There has been rumour and conjecture about an official Magic art book for years. The original artists couldn't wait any longer...

Amazingly, 20 years of magical artwork hasn't resulted in any official Magic: The Gathering art books. Forty-one of the original artists, including Jesper Myrfors and Pete Venters, thought they'd test the waters with Magic fans, and started a Kickstarter project. It passed its \$32,000 goal, reaching \$150,000 by March this year.

"The artists who worked on Magic in that first year are kind of a tight-knit group, as we all experienced the same rock stardom of being attached to the hottest game of the 90s," says Pete. "Most of the artists have done a new piece for the book, often revisiting one of their classic Magic cards."

The goblin piece by Peter, pictured here, is a mash-up/homage to the artist's many years of goblin paintings, and his Legends card Hellfire.



MORROX, DEMON PRINCE OF GOBLINS

Pete created this piece of art exclusively for the Magic art book, working in ArtRage.



ANCIENT HELLKITE

Jason Chan: "Wizards has released other side products like novels and video games, but the core of the IP is still the card game. That will always hold true. Everything else is icing on the cake."



"Some people – art directors, creative directors and a few higher-ups – were against the use of digital art in Magic"

However, the 1997 shake-up nearly nipped this digital boost in the bud. "Back then there was a meeting to discuss some finished paintings for Stronghold that had been created digitally," reveals Pete. "Some people – art directors, creative directors and a few higher-ups – were dead set against the use of digital art in Magic. They felt the game benefitted from traditional media and that digital works belonged in games like Netrunner. How times have changed!"

DIGITAL UPS AND DOWNS

Nowadays, many accuse digital of reducing the diversity of Magic art. Having initially meant more money for artists, it seems things have gone full circle. "The downside of digital is that everyone thinks that doing digital art is easy, so the pay has gone down, the deadlines have shortened and



the nitpicking has gone way, way up," says Brian Despain.

And the upside? "Digital allowed a new wave of talented artists to emerge," says Stephan, "to explore different techniques and bring a new richness to the game." And, as far as the artist who's so identified with visions of the future can foresee, digital will play a part in the story of Magic for some time to come.

"I can imagine the cards becoming more interactive online with 3D, sound and animation added to it," offers Stephan. "I can also imagine holographic cards a little bit further in the future; the scene would come to life and even interact with the opponent's card similar to the Star Wars holochess... I wonder if the players would need paper cards with that technology?"

CACKLING FIEND

"I remember the description calling for a creature whose manic laugh echoes through the pipes of the world," recalls Brian Despain, for his first Magic card art.

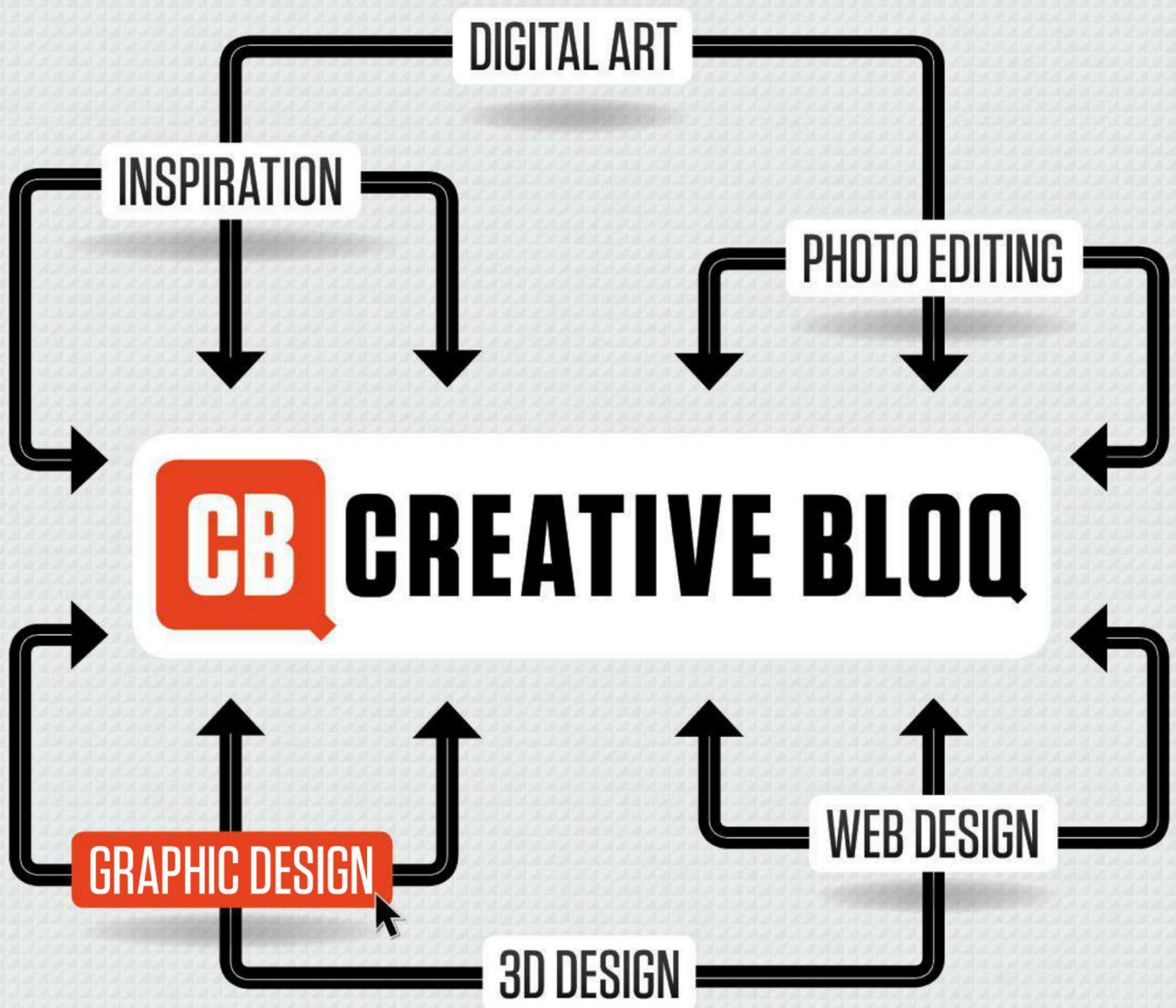


SPITEFUL SHADOWS

Artist John Stanko: "This is one of my favourite Magic cards. I enjoy its simplicity while it still touches some complex themes."



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Issue 93 March 2013



In our sci-fi special, Admira Wijaya designs believable mechs, Serge Birault paints a Barbarella pin-up, Clint Cearley creates a mechanical wizard and Nick Harris tries to put goblins in space with SketchBook Pro. We also have an interview with delightfully eccentric artist Ian Miller.

Issue 94 April 2013



Our workshop artists will give your anatomy skills a real boost this month. Cover artist David Gaillet, teacher Charles Hu and ex-Disney artist John Watkiss all endeavour to sharpen your figure drawing techniques. And Corrado Vanelli helps you depict better faces in Corel Painter.

Issue 95 May 2013



Manga and mechs make up a large portion of this month's cracking issue. Our workshop section will give you the skills to compose manga fight scenes and heroic characters, and explain the secrets of manga's masking techniques. And we discover what it takes to paint the perfect mech.

Issue 96 June 2013



Immerse yourself in the world of classic fantasy art with the help of John Stanko, who channels the skills of Frazetta to produce this month's stunning cover. Our workshop artists will also help you depict moving fabric, paint a magical forest and give your digital paintings a traditional feel.

Issue 97 July 2013



How could ImagineFX not celebrate the 50th anniversary of Marvel's X-Men, or 75 years of DC's Superman, in this month's comic special issue? And with workshops on mood lighting in your comics, how to pose two heroes and beating creative block, you'll soon be a digital art superhero!

Issue 98 August 2013



Be inspired by Simon Dominic's monstrously good cover art, then discover how paleoart has evolved over the years, as we talk to the artists who paint dinosaurs as realistically as possible. Workshops from Katie De Sousa and Weta's Christian Pearce also riff on the Lost World theme!

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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX

RISING STARS 2013

Lauren Panepinto, who's new to the Rising Stars judging panel, has advice for breaking into the industry

As creative director at Orbit books, Lauren Panepinto knows a thing or two about getting that all-important big break. One of your options is to enter art competitions such as this year's Rising Stars, which gets your painting style and approach to your art noticed and, more importantly, gives you the confidence to show your finished

work to strangers. They're usually free to enter, so you've got nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Here, Lauren goes further, explaining her 10 pieces of advice to getting your art career on the road to success...

1 PICK THE RIGHT ONLINE PLATFORM

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr... the list of social media sites goes on and on. Then there are the dedicated art sites where you can show off your imagery,

“Art directors are always happy to look at new portfolio pieces”

and interact with viewers and fellow artists, such as CGHub, deviantART and Behance. Naturally, you don't have to be on every platform, but you should pick the ones that suit you and keep them active. Let the internet work for you.

2 KEEP CREATING FRESH ART

Art directors are always happy to look at new portfolio pieces, especially work that



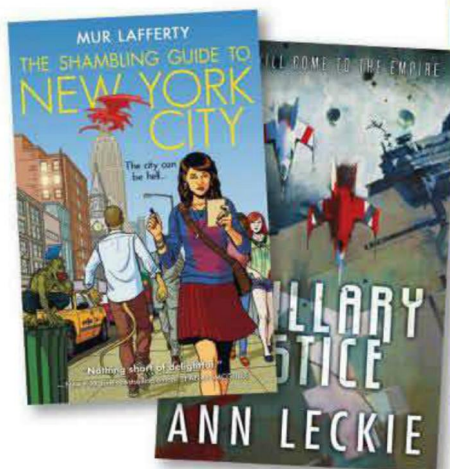
RÁN'S EMBRACE

Elizabthr Alba, one of last year's winners, is constantly adding to her portfolio, client list and recognition while taking on freelance projects.

shows improvement. A newly finished piece that you're proud of is always a good excuse to send an email or a postcard to your dream client.

3 NETWORK IN THE REAL WORLD

If you can, get to a convention that has a strong art focus, or even a local meet-up. I'm thinking Illuxcon, Spectrum, Comic-Cons, workshops, live drawing nights and company events. When art directors are at professional events, we expect to be approached by artists who want to find out how they can break in, and we're happy to chat with you.



COVER TO COVER

Lauren hires artists of all styles and disciplines for Orbit's book covers. Getting seen by her could help your career.

Closing date: 14 October 2013

NEW!

STANDOUT NEWCOMER AWARD

Although for 2013 there are no specific categories, this year we're introducing the Standout Newcomer Award, sponsored by Wacom. This award will go to one entrant under the age of 25 who the judges feel deserves special recommendation. So please remember to state your age on your bio when entering, to be automatically put through to the Standout Newcomer Award (if applicable).

The winner of the Standout Newcomer Award will receive a Wacom Cintiq 13HD (pictured).

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More prizes are being added each month, so keep popping back to see what you could win!

**Corel Painter ArtRage 4
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DrawPlus X6
Course with Bobby Chiu's
Imaginism Studio**



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WorldMags.net

4 NETWORK VIRTUALLY

There are so many resources and groups for artists online, and they're a wealth of encouragement, commiseration and peer critiques. Facebook, ArtOrder, Awesome Horse... there's a group for every subgenre of art. Get your work seen and critiqued by as many people as possible.

5 FOLLOW, DON'T STALK

It is okay to reach out to an art director you want to work for, either by email or at an event, and ask questions about what they're looking for in their freelance pool. It's also a good idea to follow them on whatever social media platform they're active on. It is not okay to harass them if they haven't answered your email, post daily to their Facebook walls, or corner them in convention hall bathrooms.

6 KEEP ON TALKING

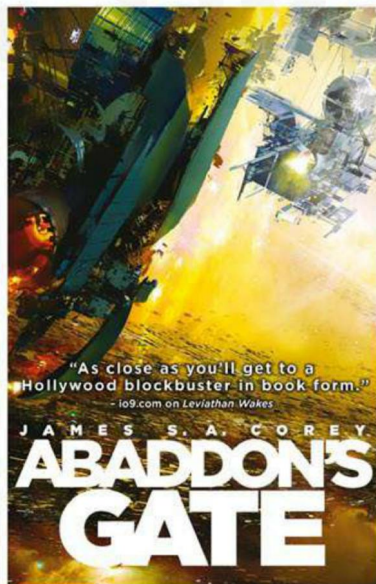
Once you've been hired, ask questions and make sure to highlight any problems. It's always better to ask if you're waiting for feedback, have a scheduling problem or need clarification on the project. Make sure it's earlier, rather than later!

7 BE POLITE

Art directors and clients are human, too. Be pleasant and respectful, whether it's in an email looking for work, or a response to yet another desired round of corrections, and ADs will remember you.

8 PROVE YOURSELF

Clients and art directors hire for more of what they see in your portfolio. If you want to work in, say, book covers, then ensure you have pieces in your portfolio that prove you're studying book covers and thinking about their composition. I never



PORTFOLIO PREPERATION

Your portfolio should sell your passions. Art directors like Lauren will hire you based on wanting more of the same.

ask an artist to do work on spec, but if you're looking for things to work on for your portfolio, then study your dream clients and do work that would fit their needs.

9 HAVE IDOLS

Chances are, whatever your dream career looks like, someone else has been there first. Learn their story and study their technique as well as their career. Have art idols as well as career idols. Human beings learn by copying. We often need to imitate before we can improvise.

10 DON'T ONLY STUDY ART

An artist is just as much about being in business as they are a creative person. Read about entrepreneurship, advertising theory, psychology and philosophy. You need to work on your career as well as your portfolio. 🍷

THE JUDGES



SAM DIDIER

The Blizzard Entertainment art director has a track record of spotting new artists on forums and turning them into pros.

www.blizzard.com



BOBBY CHIU

An illustrator and concept artist for the film and toy industries, Bobby runs Imaginism Studios and teaches around the world.

www.schoolism.com



CHRISTIAN ALZMANN

War of the Worlds, A.I., Star Wars: Episode II... Christian Alzmann worked on all of those films.

www.christianalzmann.com



JON SCHINDEHETTE

Senior art director at Wizards of the Coast, Jon's a great supporter of the art community and his blog is considered to be required reading.

www.theartorder.com



DAVE GIBBONS

A comic artist since the late 1970s, Dave started on the first issue of 2000 AD, drew Watchmen and continues to be an influence in the industry.

www.davegibbons.net



LAUREN PANEPIINTO

With 11 years of designing and art directing book covers, Lauren has worked in illustration, concept art and in the sci-fi/fantasy genres.

www.laurenpanepinto.com

HOW TO ENTER

Entrants are invited to submit five pieces of portfolio work and a short biography. You can submit digital or traditional art, or a mixture of both. Each image needs to be 2MB or under. We hope to see thousands of amazing artworks, so make sure you pick pieces that best reflect your skills. **The deadline is midnight GMT, 14 October 2013**

Enter online today at:

www.futurecomps.co.uk/rising-stars-2013

Postal entries should be sent to:

Rising Stars 2013, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

THE RULES

1. Employees of Future Publishing Ltd, and their immediate families or agents are not eligible to enter this competition. 2. Only one entry per person. Multiple entries will be discarded. 3. Entries must be received by 14 October 2013, which is the closing date. 4. All entries will be judged by the ImagineFX team and an independent panel (see list). Their decision is final. 5. The winners must agree to allow their images to be used in ImagineFX and in any promotional or marketing material. All entrants retain the copyright to their art. 6. ImagineFX and Future Publishing reserve the right to postpone the selection of the winners indefinitely if the standard of quality is not to the required level. 7. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Unfortunately we are unable to return the CDs or DVDs containing your artwork. 8. All information is correct at the time of going to press. The competition prizes and the prize value may be subject to change. 9. By entering Rising Stars you retain copyright of your images but grant ImagineFX permission to use and reuse all images in future publications, including digital editions and products, that relate to Rising Stars 2013.

Sketchbook

Jennifer Healy

We've got a case of paramnesia, where our dreams are crossing over into reality – and we like it

Artist PROFILE

Jennifer Healy

COUNTRY: US



Jennifer's elaborate illustrations first caught our attention back in issue 82, where we crowned her our FXPosé Artist of the Month. Much of Jennifer's style is founded on the storytelling qualities of colour, whether painting digitally or using traditional mediums. Music, fashion and melancholia often play an important role in her work.
www.jennifer-healy.com

CHOICES

"These digital sketches were done in Photoshop, mostly consisting of surrealism and fashion designs. I like to put them all together like this – it makes it easier to decide which one to work on first."

MEMENTO MORI

"This portrait sketch was done in Photoshop. The fully painted version is a bit different and the concept changed slightly."

FAROUCHE

"I wanted to create a dream-like environment with this digital sketch. Surrealism and a bit of an Art Nouveau influence were incorporated."

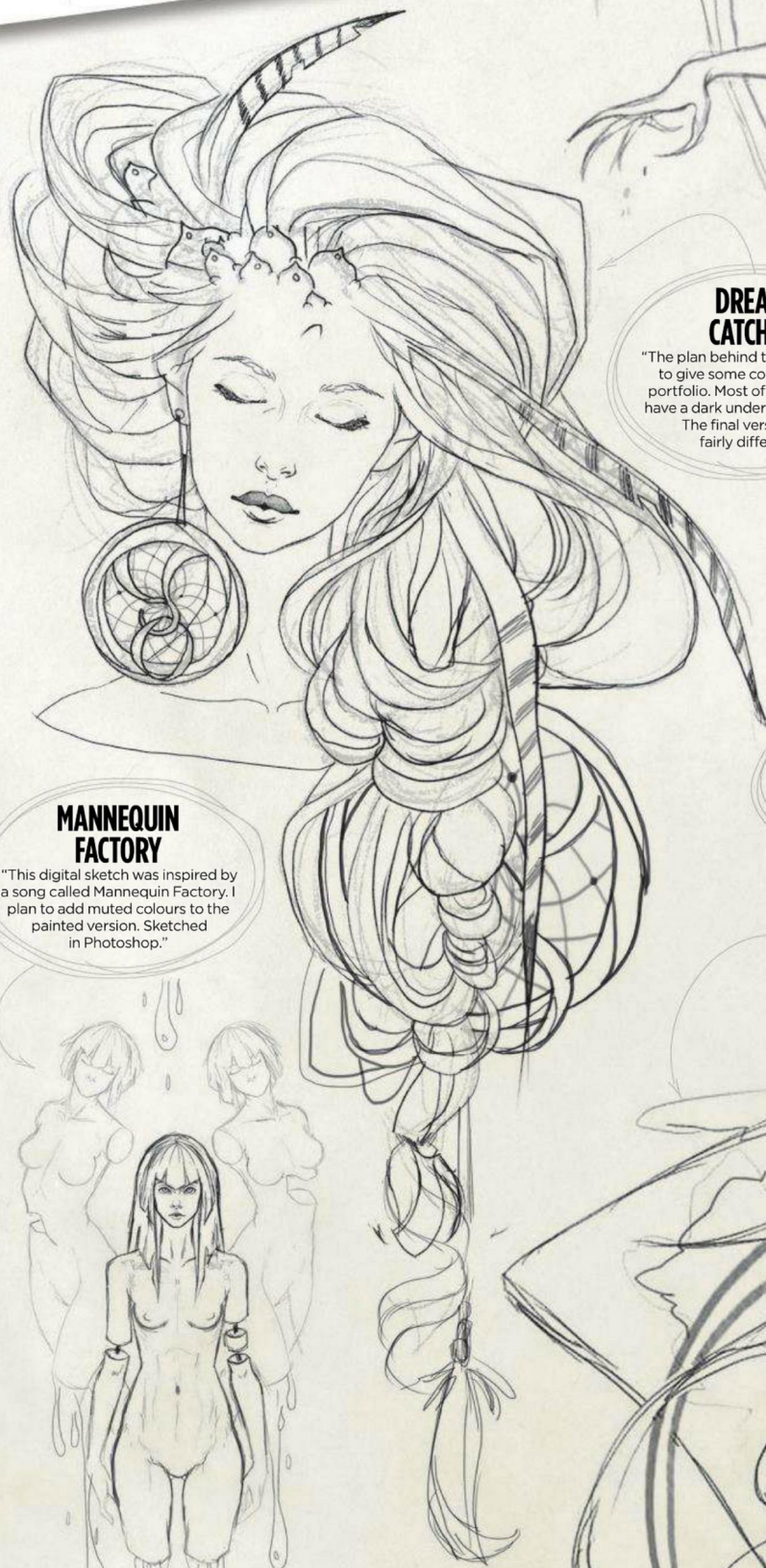


"I like to put my designs together like this - it makes it easier to decide which one to work on first"

VINTAGE SEA

"This digital sketch has some sea-like elements mixed into the design. This sketch represents a more fashion-like concept."

Sketchbook



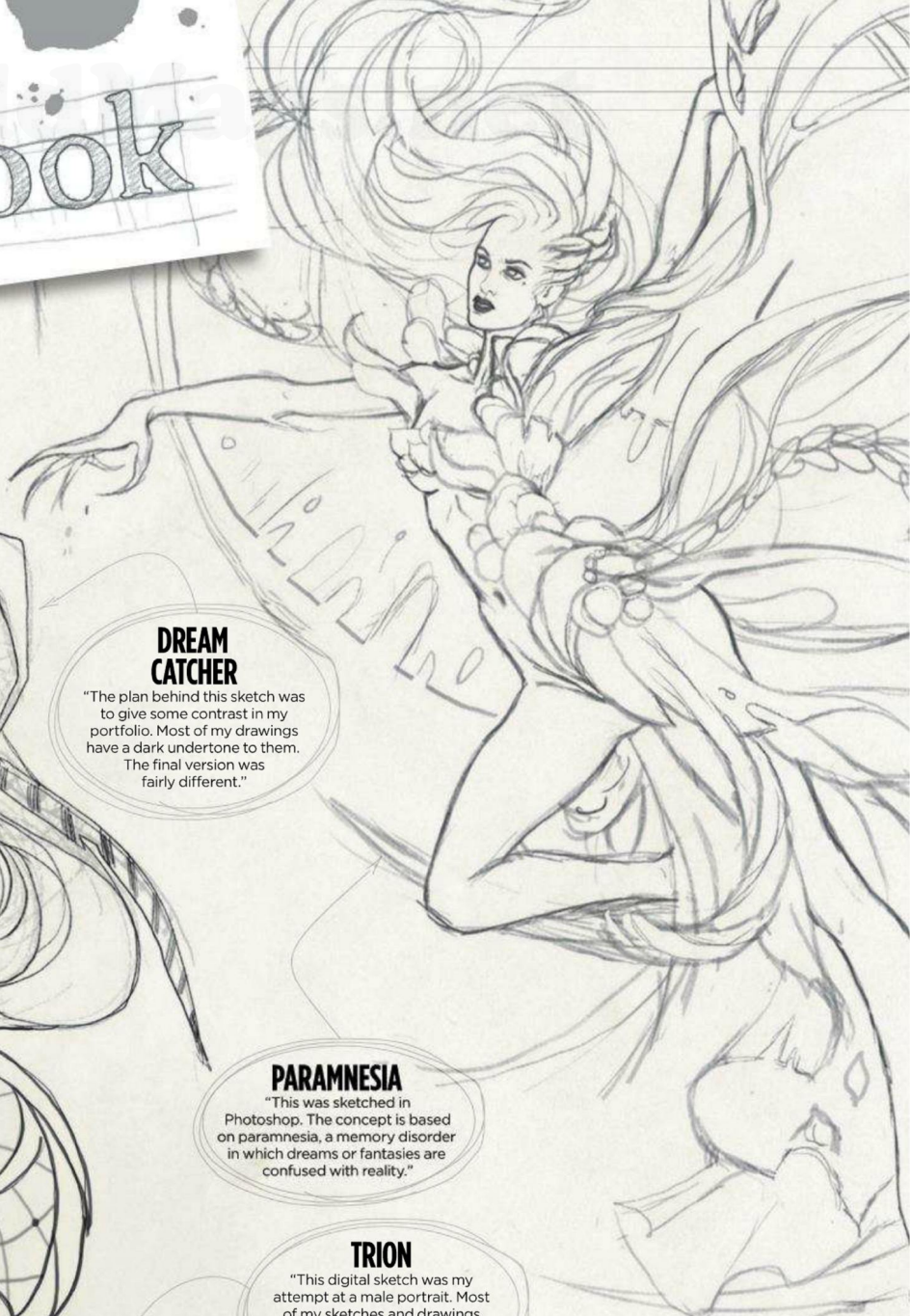
MANNEQUIN FACTORY

"This digital sketch was inspired by a song called Mannequin Factory. I plan to add muted colours to the painted version. Sketched in Photoshop."



DREAM CATCHER

"The plan behind this sketch was to give some contrast in my portfolio. Most of my drawings have a dark undertone to them. The final version was fairly different."



PARAMNESIA

"This was sketched in Photoshop. The concept is based on paramnesia, a memory disorder in which dreams or fantasies are confused with reality."

TRION

"This digital sketch was my attempt at a male portrait. Most of my sketches and drawings consist of females and surrealism. I tried to step out of my comfort zone."



"Most of my drawings have a dark undercurrent to them..."

FISHTAIL

"This is a digital sketch. I've always loved the way fishtail braids look and decided to take the concept a little bit further."

Want to share your sketches? Then drop us an email, with a selection of your artwork, to sketchbook@imaginefx.com, or upload your drawings at www.imaginefx.com/sketchbook.

ACES IN THE HOLE

Japanese online card game company **Applibot** has spared no expense in employing the world's best digital artists for its products. We showcase some of the stunning imagery they've produced

For a moment, at the tail end of 2012, it looked like Applibot was taking over the world of online digital art. Every striking fantasy character and sci-fi action scene posted online seemed to bear the mark of Galaxy Saga or Legend of the Cryptids – the two app card games that Applibot offers for free download.

There's more to the Japanese company than a big wallet, though. Art director Shogo Takeda is adamant that art was the company's starting point, and it bears scrutiny. Download the Legends of the Cryptids, and the opening animation features beautifully crafted pieces of art held in lavish gold frames.

"Our goal was to create a game with the highest-level artwork, so we got the top artists from around the world," says Shogo simply. He also knew well enough

to trust the talent: "Our briefs were kept simple, rarely more than a name and a one-line description."

Behind this open approach was a simple fact: Applibot's sudden, blanket commissioning around the world sped up output, helping it in the "race to the then-untapped global market for Japanese-style social card battle games," says Shogo.

The plan worked. It hit number one in Japan's app store top sellers list, and two in the US. Since then, Shogo admits, it's not been easy to sustain the momentum. "Similar services have come out in the meantime that are earning 10 billion yen monthly. The fact that our earnings have not kept pace has been disappointing."

However, with undisclosed plans for new projects, and more art to be released for the existing games, Applibot may yet regain the top spot. Until that's decided, we still have all this amazing art to enjoy!



ODIN

Odin, the chief god of Norse mythology, crops up in *Legends of the Cryptids*, battling the giant wolf Fenrir in Ragnarok. In myth he's destined to lose, but that's where the game and mythology diverge.



CLINT CEARLEY

"Applibot doesn't describe a character's appearance. The first one I did, Lady Paradoxia, was 'the princess daughter of the Queen of Light and a fallen angel'. Artistically, that's quite a jumping-off point."



All images © Applibot

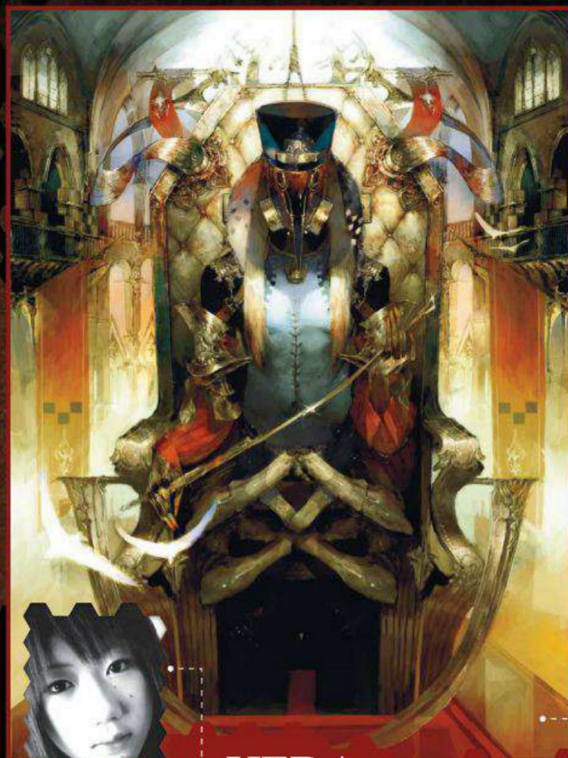


XU CHENG (CROWGOD)

"Maybe it's because we can't play online card games like Legends in China, but I think physical card games will always have a strong fan base around the world."

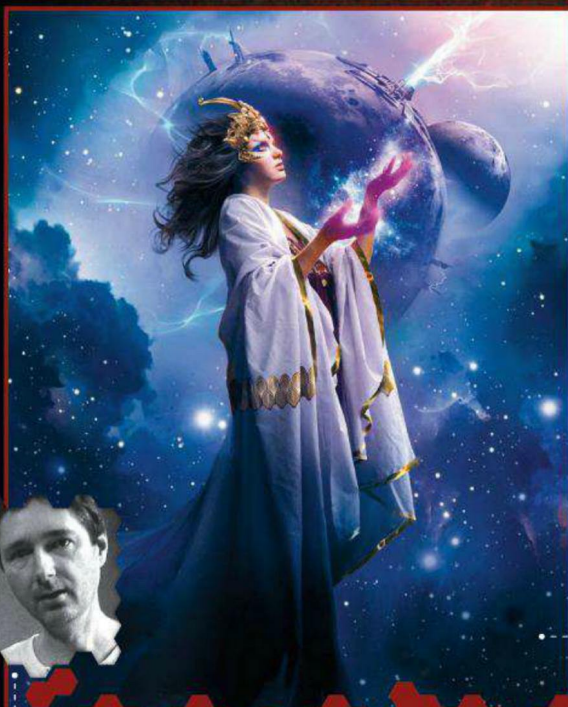
MICHAEL

Remarkably, Crowgod uploaded his first piece of art in December 2011, and by July 2012 he was working on Legend of the Cryptids, creating the characters Lucifer, the Masters of Belial and Michael, shown here.



KERA

"Most of the work I get nowadays is for online card games, geared for mobile devices. It's always a challenge to create something that'll look great full size, and on a 4.5-inch screen."



DAREN HORLEY

"Mobile phones are pretty much compulsory in the developed world, so it makes sense to create games for them. I collected bubble gum cards as a kid. This is the 21st century equivalent."

LUMINA

Lumina is the first piece Daren did for Applibot: "I used my wife as a model - wearing a bed sheet. I made her younger and prettier. She's lovely, of course, but not quite a space princess!"

QUIESCENT GREENMAN

This is the evolved version of Quiescent Greenman. Here Mike makes the character more dominant and imposing, while still rooted in nature. "Because the brief didn't specify whether it needed to look human, I went more abstract and elemental."



MIKE CORRIERO

"The brief was 'a humanoid being that guarded the forest and its animals'. I had a lot of fun playing around with the elemental look of the original version of this card."



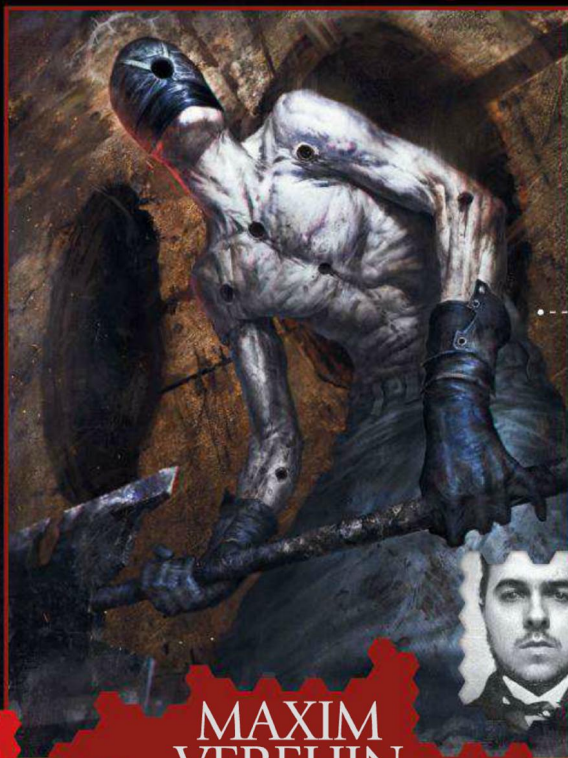
IWO WIDULINSKI

"I think that in my time we'll see people more often duelling using their tablets, and tournaments being held on big touch screens."

X-7 DEADWALKER

An upgraded take on the Demon Droid, all Iwo had to work on was that this guy liked to inflict pain. "And that's plenty," he says.





WHITE BELLATOR

This is an example of a card that Maxim suggested to Applibot, which was picked up on. "It's cool when your ideas become alive in a game," says the artist.

MAXIM VEREHIN

"Artistic freedom doesn't just mean room to move – I've also suggested my own characters, and have three sets of my own creations in these games."



THE WHITE KNIGHT LYDIA

This is the advanced version of Rupid79's The White Knight Lydia, Omix Beast Master, with added black cat support.



LEE JUNG MYUNG (RUPID79)

"It seems everything can be downloaded nowadays, temporarily fulfilling our sense of possession. But to have something rare, peculiar and precious! That's what these cards offer."



BRAD RIGNEY

"The two versions of a character is my favourite thing about this genre. The idea of a seasoned version of the same individual opens new ways to establish narrative. I totally geek out on stuff like that."

SHENHUA

"My take on Shenhua was someone who was capable of altering machines at will. I wanted to merge my influences and make something that feels Japanese by its design, but Occidental with its graphic feel."



DARK QUEEN GUINEVERE

Brad worked on Dark Queen Guinevere and designed everything about the characters and her environment – the only caveat being she was a vampire, a queen and had to be in a forest setting.



SIMON GOINARD

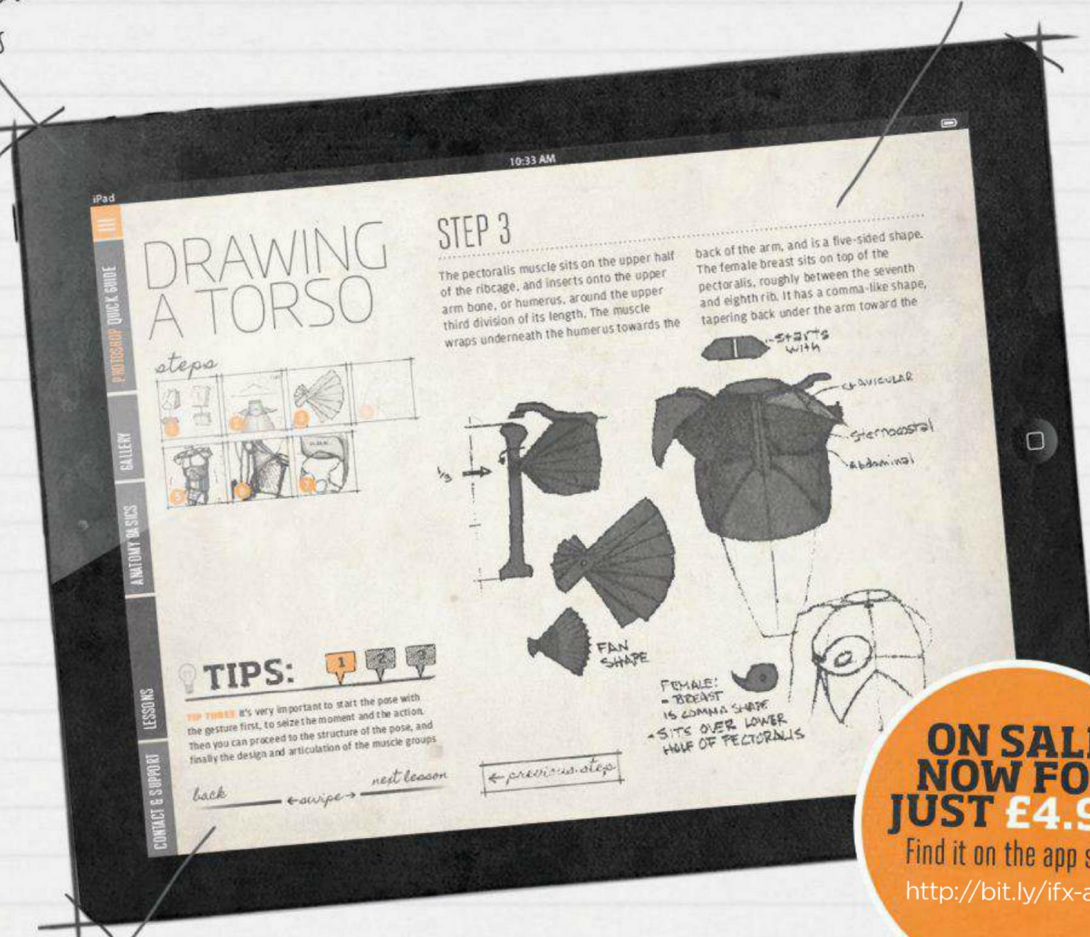
"Applibot is trying to get new online cards out there regularly, so the gap between creation and publication is as short as possible, making the art responsive to the present moment."



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Advice from the world's best artists

64



This issue:

64 Rework an iconic card character

Aleksi Briclot mixes fantasy, manga and mech tech to produce an angelic figure.

66 Tell a story with your card art

Volkan Baga explains how he creates narrative compositions in his detailed trading card art.

70 Compose a group of characters

Jose Daniel Cabrera Peña paints an image of conflict from Greek mythology.

72 Paint a misty, cloudy environment

Chad Weatherford applies atmospheric effects to a fantasy environment.

77 Working with brush sets

Paul Tysall shows how to share Procreate custom brushes with others.

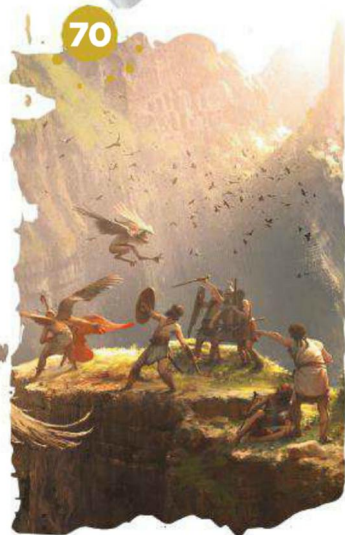
78 Sculpt and shape a sci-fi panorama

Taking us through his painting process, Sparth reveals the principles of digital image creation.

82 Plan and execute a fantasy scene

From developing a concept to those final tweaks, Dave Rapoza shows us how.

70



78



82



Aleksi Briclot mixes fantasy, manga and mech tech to produce an angelic figure who looks equally good scaled up or on the front of a playing card

64



4 Concept art
I've had to create a new, strong character design for this angel, so I need to spend time blocking in the look and the concept itself, before thinking about lighting and effects. I try to solve the formal aspects of the armour and the suit with a detailed render. As a concept artist, this image is close to what I'd give to a modeller for 3D rendering. I keep a few hard shapes on the metallic feathers, but for the most part I use round and curved shapes on the lighter parts of the armour.



5 Body gestures
I want to depict a strong character so I make the most of the angel's front profile. I use three-quarter framing to add more dynamism, and play with some diagonals. To help define the character's movements, and because the anatomy is hidden behind armoured elements, I paint in some red guidelines to follow.



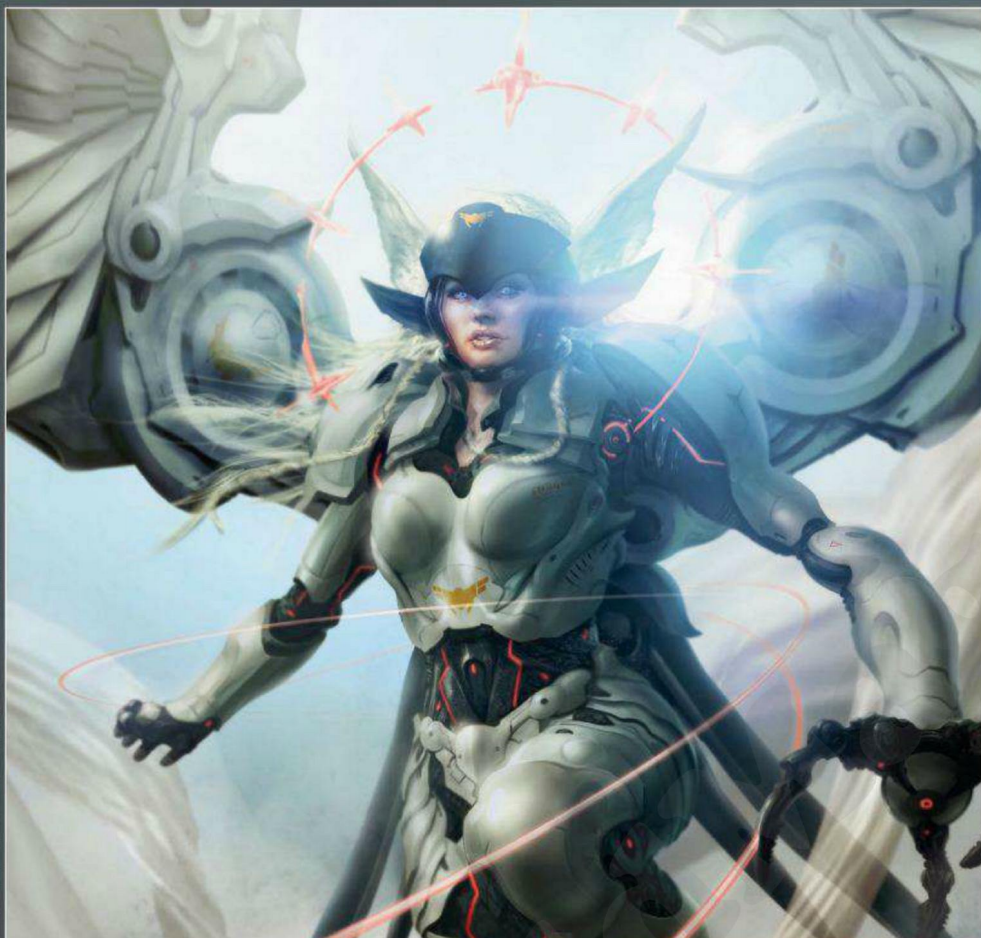
6 Graphic elements
To make the suit of armour more believable I add some graphic elements, such as logos, marks and text. The process is similar to putting small stickers on a model kit to give it a more realistic feel. Curves and round shapes also help to strengthen the composition.



7 The face
I spend a lot of time on the face, and it takes time to get a satisfactory look. I should have used photo references... nevermind! On magazine covers people respond better to close-up faces than any other subject. It's the only instantly identifiable aspect of this image.



8 Polishing
After I've blocked in the design of the character, I refine the details and polish the rendering with the light coming in from top left. I add a few cyan values in the shadows. Some warmer tones to the face help to highlight the main focal point and give more humanity to the character.



9 Finishing up
The picture is pretty much complete, but I spend some more time on the final details and rendering. I paint a halo, in the form of magenta graphic lines, this adds a hint of complementary colours. I take a risk and add a lens flare to the right of the face. I have to manage the intensity of the two light sources to achieve an effective cover image as well as a realistic piece of fantasy art.

Traditional skills **TELL A STORY WITH YOUR CARD ART**

Volkan Baga explains how he creates narrative compositions in his detailed trading card art

The trading card game Magic: The Gathering is based on a sophisticated concept and universe. The design team creates a detailed world for each set with far-reaching background and narrative depth.

Each of my paintings refers to this world, shaping it with my ideas into a coherent composition of story and pictures. The players want to dive into Magic's atmosphere, they want to feel it, experience it.

Therefore, it's extremely important that each of my paintings is not only beautiful to look at, but also communicates to the viewer. At best, they even have the ability to tell a whole story with just a simple portrait, in which the viewer wants to stay for a while.

That adds value to the painting and it shouldn't be underestimated. A perfect

Artist
PROFILE
Volkan Baga
COUNTRY: Germany



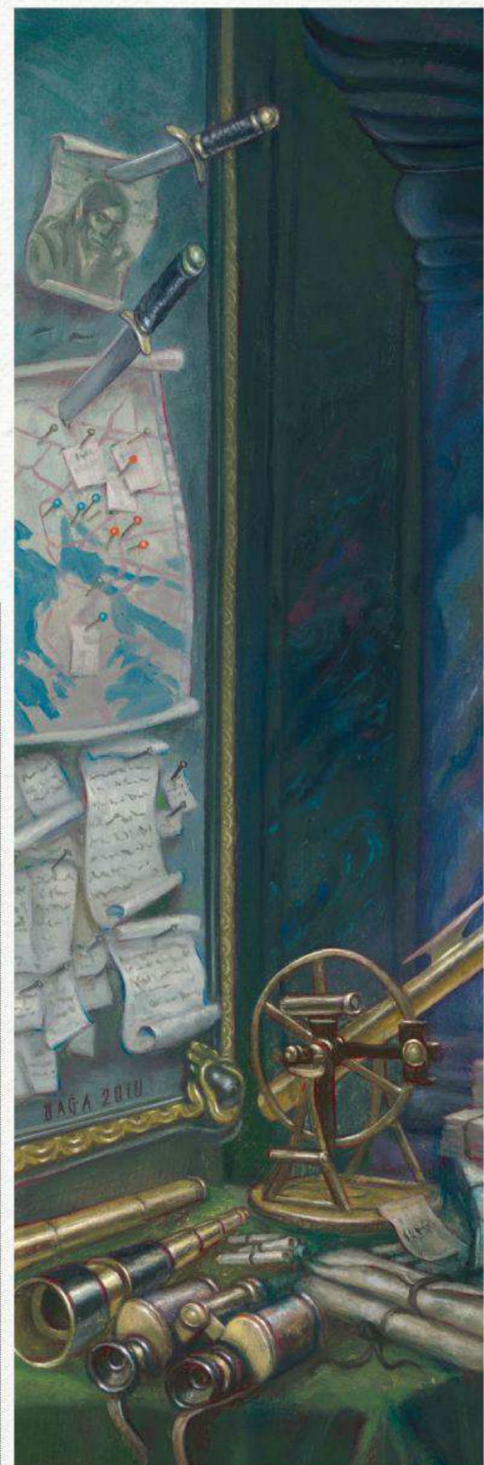
Volkan lives in Würzburg, Germany, and has been nominated for several Chesley and Graf Ludo awards. As well as personal projects, Volkan regularly paints card art for Wizards of the Coast.
www.volkanbaga.de

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/99-story

technique by itself doesn't make a good artwork. It would remain a soulless image. The viewer can realise this without necessarily being a professional. He sees it, feels bored, puts it away and forgets it.

You have to give content and a statement to the painting to make it gain in quality and longevity. So I invest a lot of time in the initial stages of the development of the art piece. I think over the briefing and Magic's style guide, until I get a good feeling for the current set.

As this feeling becomes gradually concrete, I take my sketchbook and start to roughly capture my ideas while I think about the briefing and different ways to translate it into art. Sometimes these are only fragments, such as a hand or head pose, but they can be complex scenes with people interacting with each other. All still very vague, but always with the goal of creating a narrative composition.



1 Getting that feeling

Now that I've thought through the briefing, I start to find ideas. I now know the character to be depicted, and have developed his past, present and future. Next, I look at different photos to assign that character a visual aesthetic. This helps me to see if he would feel at home or not in a precious marble interior, for example. When I flick through images I find an easy entry into the visual realisation.





2 Bringing the mental muddle to paper

Meanwhile, my head produces a countless number of vague images. That's the moment when I open up my sketchbook and start to sketch. I do this without thinking about it, and just focus on visualising my emotional impulses. The feeling that has been growing needs to be brought unfiltered to paper. In my experience, good narrative artwork touches the viewer directly. I use this technique to capture pure and genuine emotions that are constantly developing in my mind unedited. This sketching process enables me to recognise which of these visual elements will successfully deliver my raw emotions on paper.





3 Sketching out each element

After I've filled some pages in my sketchbook, I look at the individual sketches, make a selection and do another series based on them. My character is a noble and wealthy Spymaster. Such a person sends secret messages, and homing pigeons are best for that. He's an inconspicuous loner who may have to defend himself, so he needs a dagger. He carries out assassination jobs, for which he uses a poison ring. He's also an observer, so he needs binoculars, maps, and other equipment that characterise him. Such details tell parts of his story.

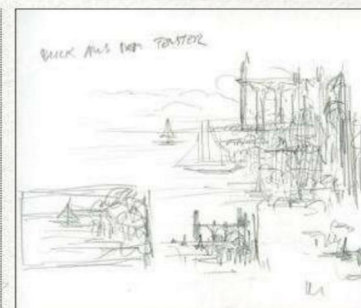
PRO SECRETS

Compiling your portfolio

Trading card games show a variety of subjects: humans, monsters, animals, odd creatures, landscapes, items and suchlike. You need to be versatile and show examples of each in your portfolio. And select only the best ones. Quality is more important than quantity.

4 Adding symbolism

To emphasise the personality of my character, I often like to use symbolism. This is a good and easy way to give the painting depth of content. The main role of the spy is to observe, to have his eyes everywhere. Therefore I choose the eye-symbol that I want to incorporate into his clothes. A good place for this is the belt, because placing the eye on the chest would be too obvious.

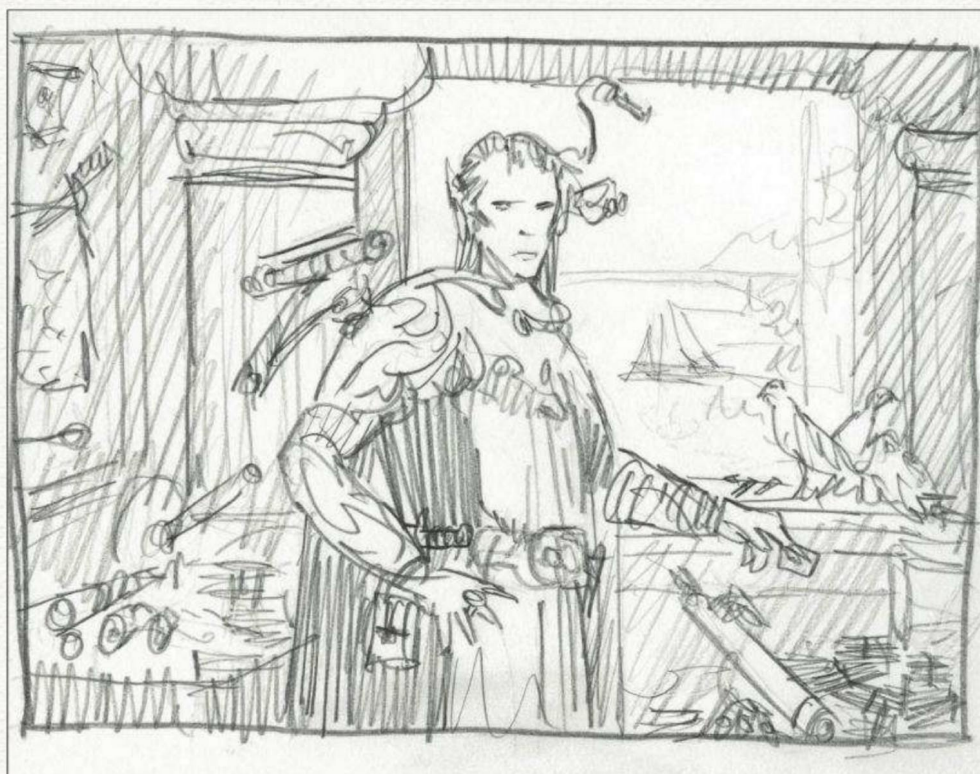


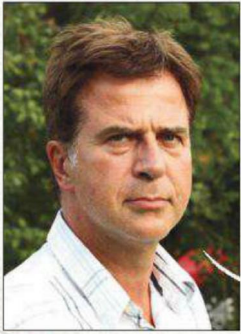
5 Choosing the right background

Now I ask myself what kind of environment would a Spymaster be presented best? I keep thinking of the narrative value of the scene. His job is to observe, and his influence covers the entire city – possibly even beyond that. Therefore, he has a good view of the events in the city. He sees the harbour and observes the incoming and outgoing traffic, the travellers and businesses. Essentially, he feels the pulse of the city.

6 Merging the composition

All my individual elements and character ideas are now finalised in my mind. Next, I bring them together in a roughly sketched final composition. The confident posture, the elegant gown and the rest of his clothes suggest that the Spymaster is of noble origin. He's surrounded by a range of ornate equipment that characterise him and his day-to-day actions. At this point in the creative process I can usually see if the individual ideas work well together and tell a coherent story.





7 Collecting reference materials

The degree of realism that I strive for in my paintings relies on photo material which I can reference while I'm painting. Meanwhile, I know my Spymaster's character and his story. The photo serves as a basis for the preliminary drawing, which I refine until it fits my imagination. A Spymaster who doesn't look like one would ruin the story.

8 Drawing in detail

Based on my rough composition sketch and my reference materials I create a detailed preliminary drawing. At this point I make sure that all the narrative details, such as the dagger, the homing pigeons, the message in the hand, the poison-ring, the map and so forth can easily be identified. They need to be obvious to the viewer.



9 Choosing my colours

Colours have a direct effect on the viewer's emotions and instantly develop an association. That's why I pay a lot of attention to the choice of colour. My Spymaster is a wealthy nobleman and the blue colour symbolises nobility. The use of gold decoration gives the painting the impression of wealth and class. I also opt for a bright, clear light and colour mood. My spy is a master in his field. He doesn't need to operate in the dark.

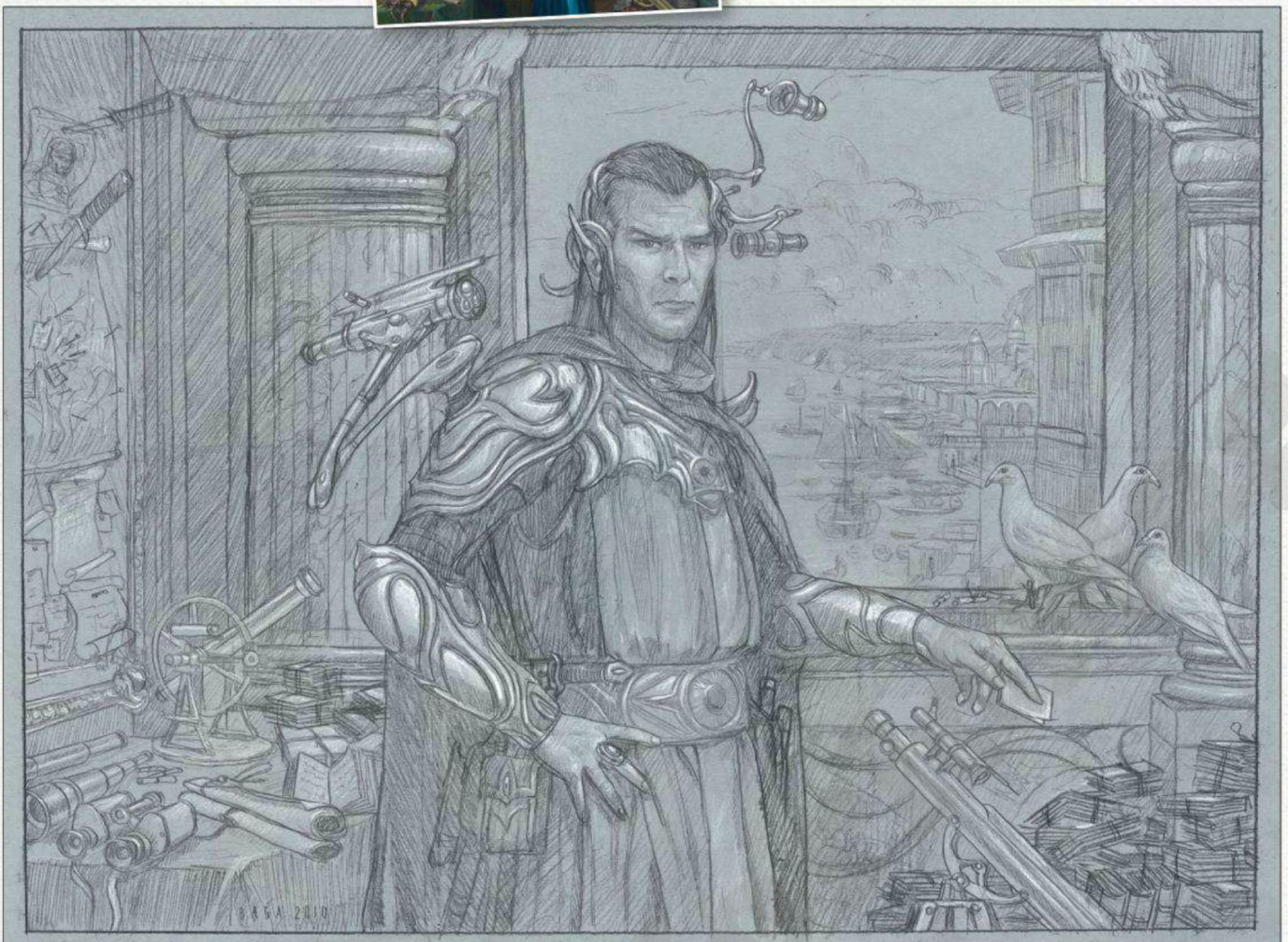
10 Painting and review

After I finish the painting, I put it aside for a few days and then have a fresh look at it. I check again whether the expression, ambience and narration are good and consistent. I retouch some areas to optimise them. Then I look at the painting and the character, and I'm glad to see he begins to tell me his story of the legendary and notorious Edric, Spymaster of Trest...

PRO SECRETS

Colours are not the same

I use Schmincke's oil colours. Each consists of individual pigments and mediums and therefore their painting behaviour differs from each other. Some are more transparent or have other properties. Red is not always red. Try to seek benefits from their unique abilities.



Artist
PROFILE

**Jose Daniel
Cabrera Peña**
COUNTRY: Spain



Jose is a
cover artist,
illustrator and
matte painter.

Since 2011, his
professional career has
been divided between
published works and
mainstream films.

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Photoshop COMPOSE A GROUP OF CHARACTERS

Jose Daniel Cabrera Peña paints an image of conflict from Greek mythology, before adding tension and atmosphere



WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

**CUSTOM BRUSH:
CHALK**

This and the other
brushes I've used achieve
a traditional look without
simulating oil brushes or
canvas texture.

This commissioned image is for the Osprey Adventures: Myths and Legends series. The recreation of Jason and the Argonauts had to match the historical accuracy of the publisher's traditional book series, while still keeping a sense of myth and fantasy.

I go back to the Bronze Age, when the myth was born, to design armour and weapons. The strongest reference for this may be Dendra armour. I begin with a loose idea of the whole image based on

singular character poses and poses in pairs and groups. I want to add strong storytelling and movement, so the poses have to show stress and violence. I also pay attention to the dynamics of the wings.

I imagine the Argonauts setting the trap to catch the harpies where Phineas the blind would be. From there, the boreads Zetes and Calais, two winged Argonauts, would chase the harpies. So I start with a rough sketch, searching for the feeling of height. I also feel I need a strong sense of atmosphere.



Colour variations

Because only basic colours have been used to fill the characters and background colour base, I use a trick to bring colour variations to the scene, although this won't work with strongly filtered palettes or those close to greyscale. I apply 'noise' on a low-resolution copy of the image and get colour variation samples all over the image, to be used wisely.

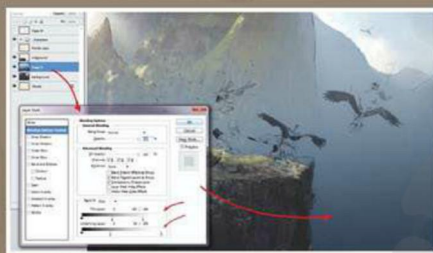
Closer to the action

My initial composition had only two depth levels: a far background and a mid-ground for the characters. I add new elements to bring the viewer closer to the action. I also make the atmosphere more graded, creating a third level of distance to the viewer.



Adding depth

Depth here is very much about two key elements, colour contrast and detail level. So I treat this harpy with a strong colour transition, from light cool tones to light warm tones. In addition, a bizarre texture created with brush strokes adds something monstrous to the creature.



Atmosphere gradient

Having placed a rough background colour behind the drawing, I create an atmosphere gradient and place it in a layer between the background and the foreground and characters. Now I can hide shadows, highlights and general background detail by using the Layer Blending sliders.

How I create... MYTHICAL MAYHEM



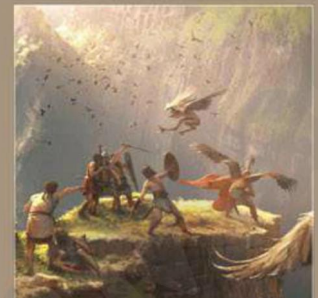
1 Scale and perspective

This early composition, based on my character ideas, is achieved by contrasting the shapes and introducing tension between figures. Scale and perspective are key. Then the basic palette is defined, but note that it's only a working one, which doesn't reflect the final look of the painting.



2 Adding colour to the scene

This complex composition needs the linework in place when I start the paintwork. I paint with basic colours and simple brush strokes in a layer under the line drawing. Many may find this to be a poor method to make the paint flow, creating hard edges and a general static feeling, but I've found this is a good way to get the job done. After that, I paint over everything with refined colours.



3 Complementary backlighting

At this stage in the painting process, any general corrections are mainly about placing a dramatic backlight without killing most of the colour in the characters. So a lateral light has to be created and warm filters used without turning the general bluish tones in the background green. Blue tones are necessary to maintain the atmosphere, and yet I think that a warmer mood looks more dramatic to my eyes.



Artist PROFILE

Chad Weatherford

COUNTRY: New Zealand



Chad is a concept artist and illustrator at Oktobor Animation

Studio, where he creates concepts for the likes of DreamWorks Animation and Hyper Hippo. He's also an instructor at The Academy of Art in San Francisco.

www.bit.ly/ifx-chadw

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Photoshop PAINT MIST AND CLOUD IN AN ENVIRONMENT

Chad Weatherford reveals how applying atmospheric effects can help you to paint a stunning fantasy environment

Applying atmospheric effects can be a great way to achieve a sense of scale and mood in your concept images. Effects such as fog and mist enable you to hide and reveal elements within the painting, creating a great sense of cinematic drama.

Atmospheric perspective is persistent even in the absence of obvious effects such as heavy fog or mist. The particles in our atmosphere tend to scatter light, which is responsible for causing objects and terrain to take on the colour of the sky the more distant they are to the viewer.

Incidences of heavy particle build-up, such as fog or mist, amplify this effect to a high degree, often obscuring things.

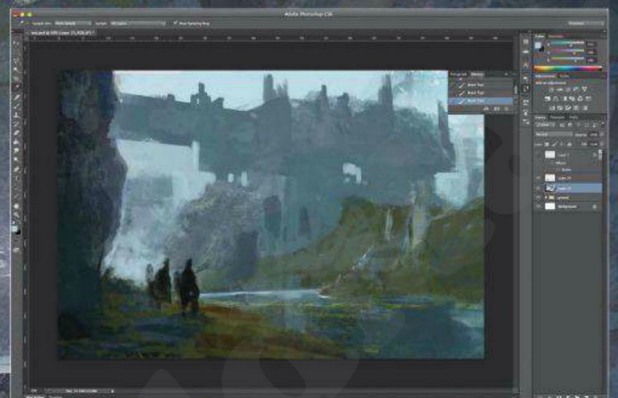
In this workshop I'll reveal some of my techniques for building up a loosely painted fantasy concept with plenty of scale and atmosphere. Shall we begin?

WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/ifx99-castle



1 Jump-start the scene

The brief mentions ruins along with the elements of mist and fantasy. To help jump-start some ideas, I create a collage in Photoshop, grab a few old paintings of mine that contain a degree of atmospheric perspective, along with a photo, and place each on its own layer. Now I play around with the layer properties until something emerges from the chaos. I Lasso out a few selections, copying and pasting the selections on to another layer. I can now see some large ruins in a mountain setting. This not only provides me with a springboard for my concept, I also have a textured ground over which to paint.



2 Blocking in the scene

I drag my collage into a fresh file, call up a new layer above it, and begin blocking in my concept using broad strokes and a fairly large brush size set to Scatter. I choose darker, slightly more saturated colours for the foreground grass and rocks and use the sky colour picked from the collage to desaturate and cool off the terrain as it recedes back into the atmosphere. This creates a feeling of depth. Keeping the image zoomed out means I don't get hung up on any specific details.



3 Preparing for the mist

I want to amplify the sense of depth and scale by adding some foreground riders who won't be as affected by the atmospheric conditions. With this in mind, I quickly draw out a selection of my immediate foreground with the Lasso tool, then copy and paste it on a new layer. On yet another layer I blob down some paint to roughly describe the riders. I can now move to the layers below, knowing the foreground elements will be safe from my misty brush technique.

PRO SECRETS

Edge control

A sharply defined or hard edge can be used to create pockets of dynamic interest. This is useful in painting an image with heavy atmospheric conditions, where the blurring effect of mist, fog or dust enables me to play hide and seek with the edges.



4 Mistify!

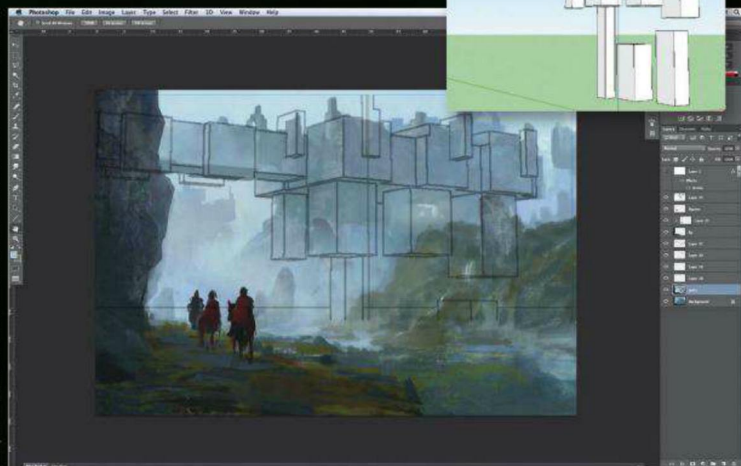
With a basic block-in established, it's time to pump up the fog and mist. I create a new layer, (under my foreground layers) and using a Soft brush set to Scatter and Opacity set at Pressure Sensitivity, I glaze over the image using primarily my sky colour, but vary the colour in areas to avoid a flat look. I use a fairly heavy-handed approach, and then back off the layer opacity until I'm satisfied with the result. I merge this with my paint layer and continue on. I revisit this technique several times, layering the atmospheric effects over several passes.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: FOG 1

Set with Angle Jitter at 100 per cent and Opacity set to Pressure Sensitivity, I use this brush to glaze in liberal amounts of mist-clouded atmosphere.



5 Perspective

While I'm building up the atmospheric conditions, I'm simultaneously painting with a low horizon to help emphasise the scale of this environment. However, with looming man-made structures developing, I decide to establish a more concrete horizon line and linear perspective grid. I create a basic model of my main structure in SketchUp, snap a screenshot of it, open this up in Photoshop and drag it into my main image file, ensuring it's at the top of my layer stack. This screenshot will act as a perspective guide for my painting. To accomplish this, I discard the colour information of my screenshot by selecting Filter>Stylize>Find edges. I then set the layer to Multiply so I'm left with a black outline overlaying my image beneath. I size this layer up appropriately to my image, creating a more precise guide for my linear perspective. Shifting back to the paint layer, I fine-tune my structure underneath the guide layer.



6 Edge and colour work

I now concentrate on smaller details and make more concrete decisions about the nebulous shapes around my image. I'm also refining edges and adding colour accents to help with the overall flow of the image. I'm mindful that most of my soft edges and detail loss will be on the ground, with the silhouette of the various elements becoming more defined as they rise up from the mist. To help distribute rock texture, I copy a section of my foreground cliff face and paste it into my image a few times.



7 Walk away!

Mistakes can be hard to see when you're involved with a painting, which can cause you to zero in on things that aren't necessarily important in the larger scheme of things. Flipping your work-in-progress horizontally from time to time can highlight errors, but if you have the luxury of leaving your painting for a while, it helps you to disassociate from it and view it with a more critical eye. In this case, I leave the painting for a day, returning to it only to realise how barren the middle of the image feels to me, so I set to tackling the problem immediately.

Shortcuts Clone Stamp

S (PC & Mac)
Hover over a textured area and Alt+click (PC) or Opt+click (Mac) to paint that area elsewhere.



8 Additional elements

I determine that I need to add a few extra elements to add interest to the middle portion of the canvas. I create a new layer and roughly sketch out a tentative solution, made up primarily of more ruins. I make yet another layer under my sketch, and roughly paint these additional ruins to help me to determine if this is the way to go. I decide that the new ruins not only add some additional elements of interest, but have the fringe benefit of enforcing that this location is an abandoned site of some ancient civilization, so I press on!



9 Introduce the riders

I have avoided the riders for some time while concentrating on other aspects of the image, but it's time to give them a bit more love. Having kept them on a separate layer, I can carve out their shapes using a hard edged Eraser without worrying about painting back the landscape around them. I use an add and subtract technique similar to sculpting, whereby I blob down some paint and carve out with an Eraser. Using a reference image that I snapped from a video of horseback riders in Colorado helps me with accuracy.

10 Unifying texture

To add yet another layer of atmosphere along with a subtle colour shift, I grab a detail clip of an acrylic painting from my ancient past and overlay it onto my painting. I set this texture layer at about 30 per cent Opacity and go to Image>Adjustments> Hue/ Saturation and adjust the sliders until I get a subtle result that doesn't obscure my overall value pattern. This also serves to unify my various textures and digital brushwork I've worked up over the course of the painting. I follow this with more detail and decide to close in on the finish.

PRO SECRETS

Cool light, warm shadows

As a general rule, cooler light produces warm shadows. Ambient light can invade shadow areas, affecting the colour temperature, but the relative cool light vs warm shadow colour relationship shouldn't be ignored. If I'm creating a shadow area within my painting with a cool light source for instance, I'll often colour pick the lighter area and then skew my colour within Photoshop's Color Picker to a warmer, darker, and slightly more saturated colour to use as my shadows. The opposite holds true for warmer light, which tends to produce cooler shadows.



11 More atmosphere!

Well... almost the finish. Before I enter the home stretch I decide the image needs a lift, and what better way to accomplish that than by adding more atmospheric effects! I'm thinking of an early morning sun carving through the scene, stirring up the mist. I create a new layer and use the same soft Scatter brush technique as earlier, but this time using a slightly warmer, orange-yellow light. I concentrate this effect close to the ground, where the condensation of water particles would cause lots of light scatter. The image is now screaming for some sunrays, so I use the Polygonal Lasso tool to create some sunray shapes on another layer and then drag a light yellow gradient across the lassoed shapes. I add a Gaussian Blur using Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur to soften the edges of this effect and then erase out portions with one of the soft Scatter brushes, to show the rays are passing through and being broken up by the hazy atmosphere.



12 Finishing touches

I have more ideas that I could pursue in this one, but the process of chasing endless possibilities could drag on indefinitely. I read somewhere that artwork is never finished, only abandoned. If that's the case, it applies to deadline-driven concept illustrations in a huge way, so it's time to put the finishing touches to this picture. I look over the image and decide what it needs. I add details here and there, as well as dust a few select areas with more mist. After this, I call up a photo filter Adjustment layer from the bottom of my layers palette and apply a cooling filter to give it more of a chilly morning feel. Finally, I paint back in some of the warmer yellow areas using the provided layer mask, and call it a wrap.

Shortcuts Copy Merge

Ctrl+Alt+Shift+E (PC)
Cmd+Opt+Shift+E (Mac)
Use to copy contents from all the visible layers, which can be pasted onto a new layer.



FANTASY
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Procreate WORKING WITH BRUSH SETS



Now you're making custom brushes for Procreate, it's time to make them freely available to other artists. **Paul Tysall** reveals his caring, sharing side

In the previous issue we covered the basics on creating your own Procreate custom brushes – arguably the software's core feature – which can be stored in your personal brush sets. Brush sets are a great way to manage workflow, especially if you're working on a project with a specific look and feel and you want to transpose them across several images.

If you're working as part of a team you might want to share these elements with fellow artists. Below I'll show you how Procreate makes this a painless process.

Savage Interactive, the developers behind Procreate, has a great website with a proactive community and forum section. It's worth heading over there to have a look at what's available and to share your own creations.

Artist PROFILE

Paul Tysall
COUNTRY: England



After four years as ImagineFX's art editor, working with the elite of the digital art world, Paul is now a busy freelance designer and illustrator.
www.tysall.com

VISIT THE ARTERY

Procreate's in-app store is a great resource for specific brush sets. When you select a pack, the available brushes (eight in total) are displayed below in a preview panel, so you can demo their attributes.



pro water

Features four brushes that utilise Procreate's Wetness settings, along with four stamp-style brushes.



pro organic

Brushes influenced by organic surfaces. This is a great set for artists who want a traditional feel to their digital paintings.



pro industrial

This collection of texture brushes comes in handy for fleshing out your environment concept sketches.



pro charcoals

These are ideal for life drawing, but equally it's the easiest set to create yourself as custom brushes.



pro elemental

This set enables you to paint smoke and flames textures and effects. It also contains a great Clouds brush.



pro spraypaints

Four brushes that imitate different spraycan nozzle types. The other four emulate graffiti art techniques.



pro touchups

Contains useful skin and hair brushes, with a great Zombie Skin brush thrown in for those rotting flesh days!

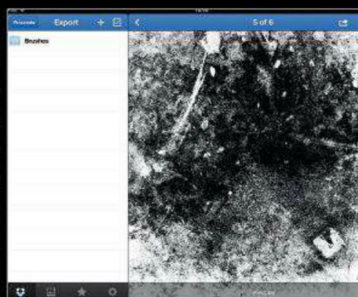


pro luminance

Effects brushes that will give your sci-fi paintings that JJ Abrams' feel. Use with an Add layer for showbiz results.

1 Sharing via Dropbox

Create a folder in your Dropbox labelled Export. Inside this make another subfolder for your brushes, either via your desktop computer or using the Dropbox app. It's also worth going into your iPad settings, locating Procreate and ensuring Unlink Procreate from Dropbox is set to Off. This should be the default setting, but it's worth checking prior to using Procreate in conjunction with Dropbox.



2 Export to Dropbox

Tap the Brush icon and swipe to the right of the various brush styles to find the New Set icon. Select this, give your set a name (you can make 12 sets in total) and begin populating it with your custom brushes. To share a custom brush you've created, simply locate the brush in your set, swipe it from left to right to reveal the Share option, then navigate to Dropbox and export it to the folder you made in step one.



3 Import new brushes

You can add a brush that someone else has created to your own sets. If another Procreate artist emails you a .brush file you can download it from Mail (on your iPad) to Procreate. This will download into a new folder ('Imported'). Another method is to use Dropbox. Select the Plus icon in the Brushes popover and tap Import, then locate the .brush file in your Dropbox folder. Savage Interactive also offer artists' brush packs via its in-app store: Artery (see boxout).



Photoshop

SCULPT AND SHAPE A SCI-FI PANORAMA

By taking us through the painting process of one of his personal pieces, concept art legend **Sparth** reveals the principles of digital image creation

When it comes to digital art, and more generally the use of digital techniques, there's now a lot more to choose from than there was a decade ago. The reason for this expansion is primarily because of the wider selection of tools and software now available. And of course, it's also linked to the minds of new generations of artists who constantly push the boundaries of techniques, inventing new surprising tricks out of tools that we thought we knew inside out.

Artist PROFILE

Sparth
COUNTRY: US



Sparth is one of the world's leading art directors and concept artists. He's worked on many high-profile video games, including *Alone in the Dark 4*, *Halo 4*, *Rage* and *Assassin's Creed*.
www.sparth.com

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I'm convinced that artists must use all the possibilities that the digital format can provide. Simply emulating traditional techniques nowadays isn't enough. For this very reason, I consider my canvas more like a sculpting ground, a place where I can move, cut, transform and erase anything to my liking – and I do this at any time in the process of a piece.

I've also improved my workflow and schedule by adding techniques based on personal templates – which are extracts of previous images – as well as custom shapes that will give me instant results.

Navigating around these shortcuts and templates doesn't change the basics of creating an image. The principles of composition, colour and light are still the foundations of digital images. But the way we engage the development of an image from a single idea has clearly changed, and for me, it's for the better.



1 Initial research

When it comes to personal pieces like this one, I can allow myself to be quite creative in my process, mostly by adopting unconventional techniques, such as starting an image with extracts of previous paintings I've done. This is the case here: the piece of dark blue material belongs to an older painting.



2 Abstract templates

The lower elliptical shapes come from a spaceship I previously extracted from one of my 'template' sheets. I'm not really interested in what they represent – I just like their perspective and pattern. The perspective in this extract will become important, because it'll help me determine the final angle for the piece. Apart from this detail, I'm still unsure as to where I'm heading. I let the abstract approach guide my decisions.

In depth Sculpt and shape



3 Unifying approach

I add a simple blue tone to the canvas – it's sitting on a Normal layer. It's a great way to join together all the extracts into a single unifying tone.



PRO SECRETS

Horizontal flip

I have a shortcut that flips the canvas horizontally. I use it every day for every single image I've worked on, because it enables me to see my image with a fresh eye. After a few minutes, the eyes get used to the positions of shapes on a canvas, and flipping it every now and then makes it easier to spot composition and perspective errors.

4 Deep blue

I add more of the same dark blue extract until it covers the canvas. This same small patch of blue and black has now been pasted several times and at different angles.



5 Setting foreground elements

With the help of the Clone Stamp tool, I now build the foreground elements. Although the image remains pretty abstract, I can already see structures, floors of a building, as well as a suggested perspective. The image will open on a blue hazy sky so I already know that we'll be looking down on some type of epic cityscape.

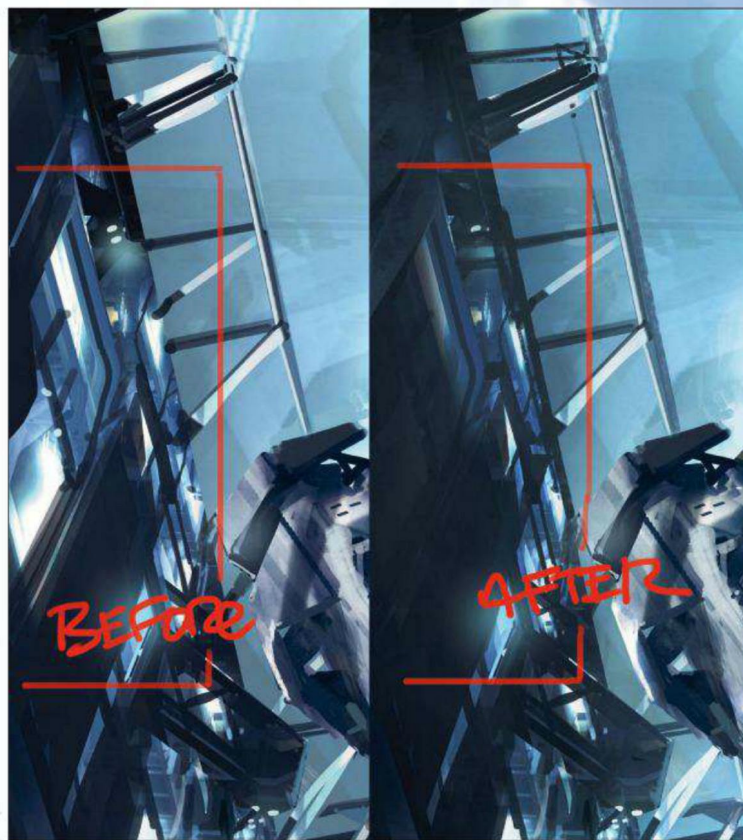
6 Time for spaceships

I add the central key piece of the image: a large, cigar-like spaceship, with its front turned in our direction. For the base I use another personal design that I cut and paste on to the canvas, which is then stretched and deformed according to my needs. With the help of a Color layer, I also adapt the tones of the spaceship to complement the rest of the image. To add depth to the image, I decide to bring a second, smaller spaceship just behind the first. It's scaled down, but is visually similar to the main spaceship. Keeping the same design for both vehicles can give the viewer a hint at how big these spaceships are.



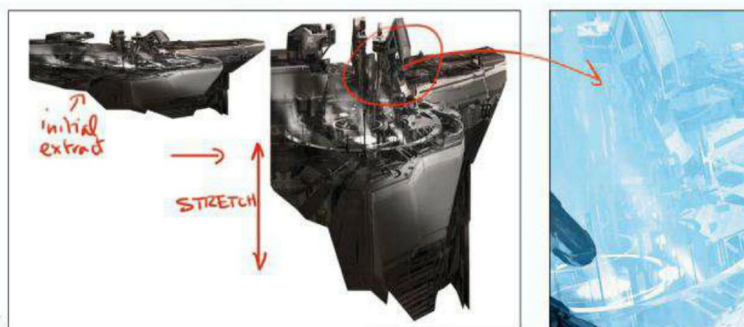
7 Detailing phase

I start focusing on the details, first by defining the final silhouette for the spaceship. It's now bulkier and more detailed. We can see a small central cockpit for example, as well as typographic elements that introduce storytelling elements to the image. I add a ramp on the foreground that leads to the spaceship. It'll enable me to connect the main vessel to its environment later on.



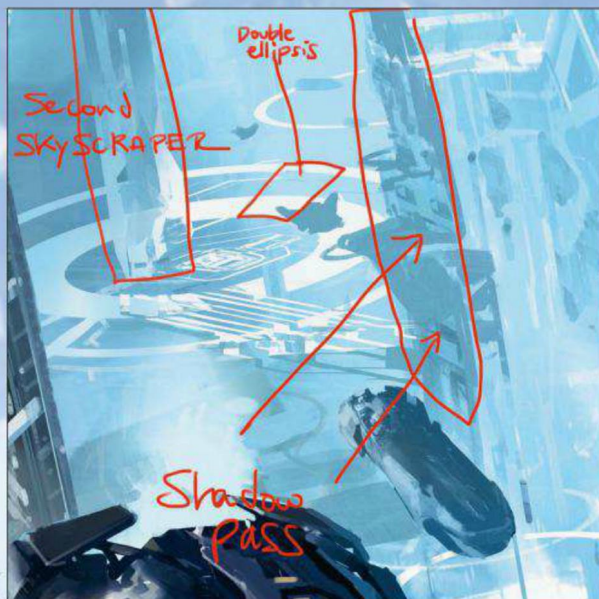
8 First light and atmospheric pass

To better guide the viewer towards the centre of the image, I decide to remove the bright windows over on the left that are too close to the frame, because the bright contrast of these windows will prove distracting to the viewer. I then apply several passes of light and atmosphere, notably the blue lights on the front of the spaceship, as well as on its flank. It's a great way to push back the dark-coloured elements and add an extra dimension to the image.



9 Adding more detail to the background

Now that I'm happy with my composition and have a pretty good idea of what the final image is going to look like, I'm free to concentrate on the distant background. I need to give the advanced cityscape more details and visual interest. I start this process by choosing another 'extract' from my template sheets, which in this case resembles a towering industrial structure of some kind. I'll use this particular extract to start painting futuristic skyscrapers into the scene.



10 Enhancing the background

I still want to apply a second detail pass to the background. For example, I feel that I need to add a stronger shadow to the main building as well as painting another bright skyscraper at the right-most side of the image. The second white building is created with personal custom shapes that I apply to the canvas before rotating the orientation to my liking. The large circular shape around the structure is generated in the same way: it's a custom shape consisting of two circles that I apply by stretching the shape into the best-possible position.



PRO SECRETS

Clone Stamp tool scaling

When you use the Clone Stamp tool to copy specific parts of the canvas, don't forget that there's a feature enabling you to horizontally and vertically scale your source material when applied to the canvas. It gives a great deal of possible variations by cloning elements in larger and smaller sizes.

11 Bringing in more storytelling elements

Additional background spaceships and flying objects will add a lot of context. They have to remain small, otherwise they'll compete with the foreground vessel. I tweak the general colour tone by adding a warmer colour pass to the foreground. I apply a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer and erase in the background areas where I want to keep the cold blue tone. After the addition of a lot of small details such as windows, light sources and particle effects, I paint a tiny central silhouette entering the spaceship. The image is now done!



Photoshop PLAN AND EXECUTE A FANTASY SCENE

Discover the painting process **Dave Rapoza** applies to all his digital art projects, from developing a concept to those all-important final tweaks

In this workshop I'm going to plan, sketch and work up an image just as I would on any client job, using Photoshop and a large Wacom Intuos 3 tablet.

I'll begin with the initial idea. It's probably the most overlooked part of the image creation process when starting out as a student, or just following tutorials online. I've noticed that the emphasis in these advice articles is on execution of techniques, with idea creation being quickly set aside. Yet without a solid idea the image, even if it's well executed, will

end up looking boring. That being said, you don't need to create anything ground breaking. Just look to your favourite movies, your well-thumbed books and comics, that certain piece of music that's always on repeat... basically anything that helps inspire an image in your mind.

All this sounds pretty obvious, but I know from experience that when I was more focused on learning, my imagination suffered because I didn't focus on creating new ideas. Always allow yourself to break from the fundamentals and just have fun thinking, then painting

around. In my opinion this is more important than learning all the basics.

So here I'm going to cover how to establish a composition as a base, creating a sketch with this same composition in mind, and then working up the sketch using values to control the focal points and direct the viewer's eye. I'll also be covering how and when to use details in your images. These are all key steps that I go through, whether it's a personal piece of fan art, or a client commission, like this skeleton king figure, so I hope you find it useful.

Artist PROFILE

Dave Rapoza
COUNTRY: US



Dave is a full-time freelance artist who's worked for

Wizards of the Coast and Applibot. When he's not working he's busy putting together his own comic: Skull and Shark. www.daverapoza.com

**DIRECT LINK FOR
WORKSHOP FILES**
www.bit.ly/99-skeleton

1 Choose a theme

After discussions with ImagineFX, the idea of a skeleton king getting up to despotish shenanigans is soon settled on. I then decide on an L-composition, and begin sketching around using a kind of charcoal brush – it has a hard edge and blends with a little texture. I don't do any final lines: instead, I'm mostly carving out shapes with value. This can be done quickly by pressing D, setting your foreground/background colours to black/white, and switching between them by pressing X to quickly erase and draw.

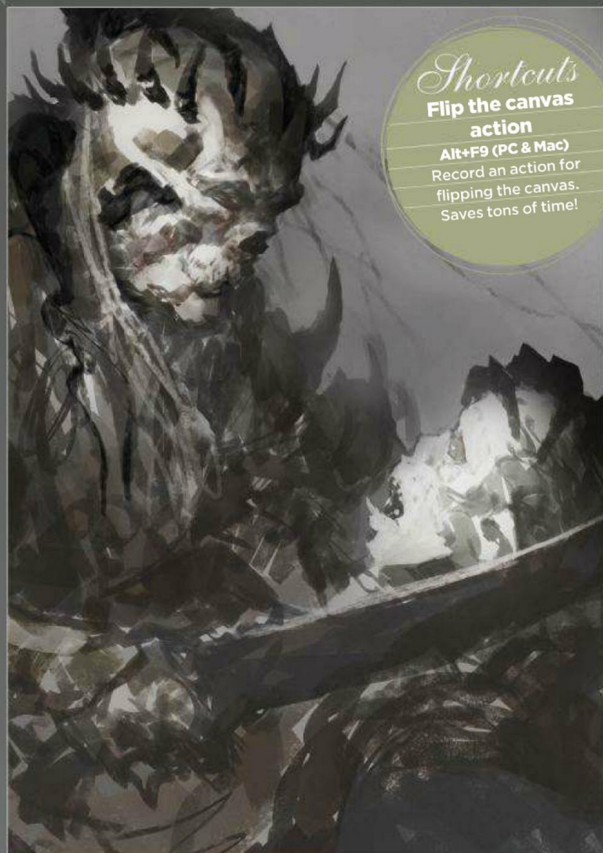


2 Bring in a little colour

Once I have a sketch with a little value variation I start to add colour. I set my brush to a Soft Round with Noise turned on, create a Soft Light layer and brush in basic colours. This image should turn out pretty desaturated, so I'm not too worried about generating super-vibrant colours. Indeed, I can play with the colours using adjustment layers such as Color Balance or Selected Color to get my final sketch looking the way I want. ➡

3 Tighten up the basic shapes

Now I can begin working on my final brushwork. I select a mid-range grey and fill in the image on a new layer. I drop the layer's Opacity to around 50 per cent. After this I create a new layer, and using the Charcoal brush and Soft Round again set to 80 per cent Opacity, begin refining the sketch without dropping to pure black or white. I want to build up my mid-tones first. This is the stage where I start to tighten up all the basic shapes in the image.



Shortcuts

Flip the canvas action

Alt+F9 (PC & Mac)
Record an action for flipping the canvas. Saves tons of time!

4 Introduce textures

I continue to work up the basic shapes, refine the sketch and paint in some simple textures to differentiate the materials. You can do this by gathering some references. If you're not already used to painting such surfaces, I would just Google "rusty armor, decaying bone, tattered cloth, leathery skin" or whatever else seems appropriate.

PRO SECRETS

Get into shape

Start exercising! I know this might seem like it has nothing to do with art, but it does. Starting a daily routine to get off my ass and run or work out was the best thing that happened to my art. I feel more aware, sharper and am quicker to work around problems. Fatigue is a killer – especially with this job – so make sure it's not the only thing you do on a daily basis!



5 Set the focal point

Now it's time to start defining the areas of focus. I can do this by painting in the highlights and working up the lighting to define the areas I want the viewer's eye to rest on. It's tempting to jump to this stage early on, but you need to make sure you get everything up to the same level before detailing like this.

6 Keep the eye moving

Now that I've defined the focal points I can get back to the less-important parts of the image. I go in with a Soft Round brush set to about 20 per cent Opacity and, using the Color Picker to select colour throughout, I begin losing edges and blending values. This is done pretty much everywhere I don't want the eye to rest: the back/top of the skull; the shoulder in the background; and the lower parts of the image. I want to make sure that the skull, the blade and the goblin's face are the areas that are sharpest and have the most contrast. These three elements follow my L-composition.



7 Have fun rendering

Now that everything is in place I can safely render up the image. All of this is done using the Soft Round brush with Noise set to around 80 per cent. Lots of noodling around goes on at this stage, I like to really get in there and detail out my focal points. It's a lot of fun to get to this part of the painting process and it's a big reason why I work the way I do. Staying loose throughout the process keeps me entertained – I'm able to enjoy watching the image come together without getting lazy or bored.

Shortcuts

Make more of your tablet

Tablet buttons (PC & Mac)
Assign all shortcuts to tablet buttons for even shorter cuts.

9 Background interest

I'm pretty much done at this point, but I reckon that I can make the background feel a little less empty. The tree is from a free photo: I drop it in and apply Gaussian Blur on a Multiply layer, while erasing out bits here and there. The birds are quickly painted in and then motion blurred. Now I'll look the image over and start working in smaller/sharper details again for more focus.

PRO SECRETS

Learn to put the hours in

There are no secrets. Just work hard, sit down and keep at it! Study the fundamentals every day and keep on trying to improve! I'll bet you can find at least an hour a day to do this. You probably spend an hour just on Facebook alone. Cut it out! Do an hour every day and in a month you'll be 30 hours ahead of yourself in personal improvement!



10 Make it pop!

My image is complete, but I want to try out some adjustment layers to see if I can make it pop more or work better with my colours. I play around with the colour balance, and selected Color and Photo filter adjustment layers. I also click the Layer Mask on some layers and work the effect in and out of the image, using black and white as my colours on the mask. Then I sharpen the image with the Smart Sharpen filter until it looks crisp without going too crazy. And that's it!

8 Refine the image

I carry on refining and painting smaller details: blood, weathered armour, rust, general wetness, or whatever else can be done at this stage. I add these elements towards the end of the process because I want to make sure everything is in place – I don't want to paint over the image again because I jumped ahead. All of these effects are generally applied using Soft Light or Multiply layers. I'd suggest playing around with both, using different colours and value ranges to achieve different effects. In addition, using Color Dodge layers can produce some nice specular effects.





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Next month...

Join the celebration!

Seven years of ImagineFX – time to party! Check out the guest list for issue 100...



MARTA DAHLIG



Jason Chan returns to ImagineFX to paint issue 100's cover!

www.jasonchanart.com



GENZOMAN



RAYMOND SWANLAND

Workshops

Marta Dahlig

Having been with ImagineFX since our second issue, Marta returns to share her unique techniques.

Dan LuVisi

LMS, Dan's own IP, is bigger than ever. See how the artist paints his kick-ass characters next issue!

Genzoman

One of ImagineFX's most popular artists is back to reveal how you can improve your manga art.

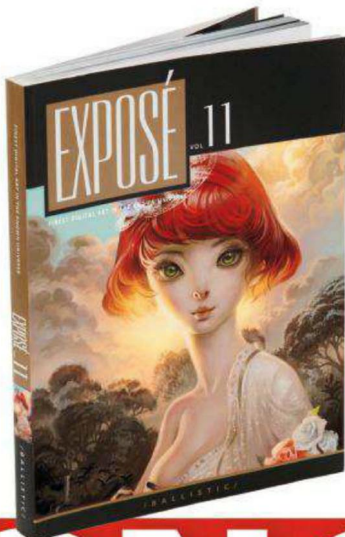
Raymond Swanland

Learn to create amazing creatures with the legendary concept artist.

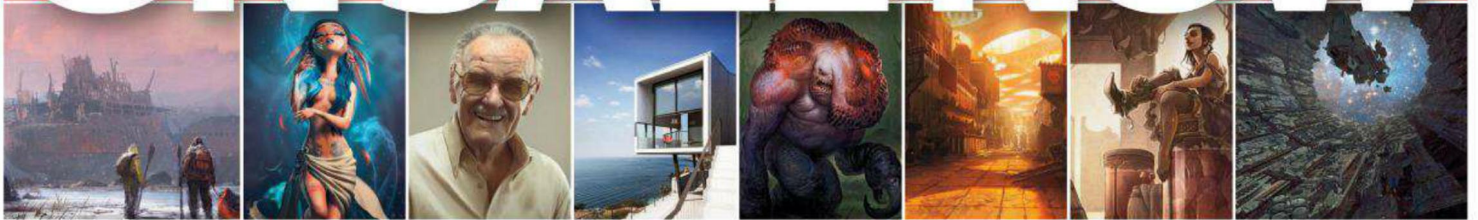
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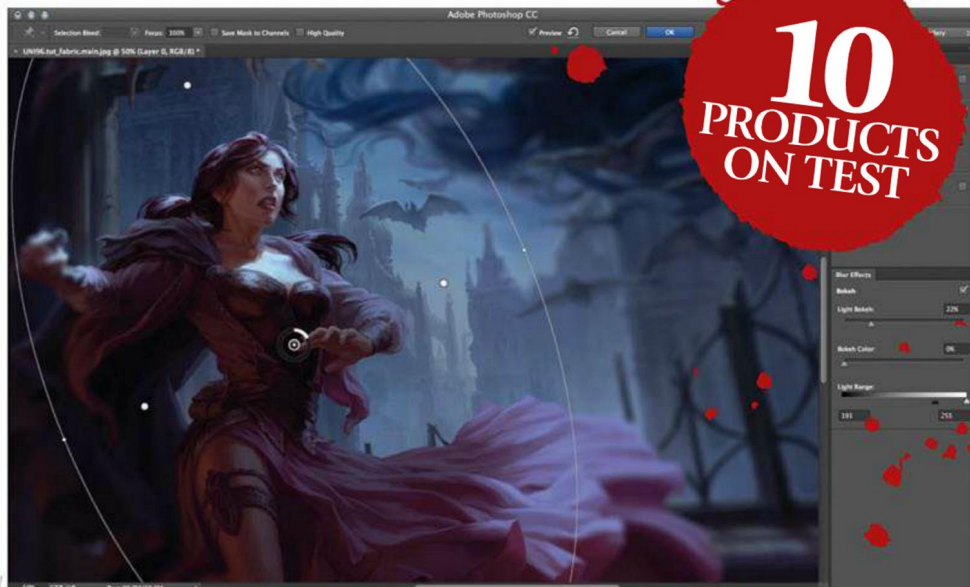
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Reviews



Artist's Choice Award
Software and hardware with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...

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Adobe moves its software to an all-subscription model. But does it offer good value to digital artists?

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Is the new, matt-screen tablet much use for plein air artists?

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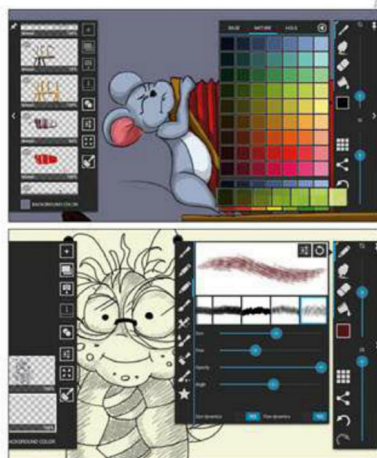
93 ZBrush for Concept Artists Vol 1

Concept art king Ben Mauro explains how to design creatures with virtual clay – and why you should be doing the same.

BOOKS

94 New reads

The Art of Remember Me; Vamps, Tramps & Beauties; Magic 1400s–1950s; River of Stars; A Game of Thrones: Volume 2; Anarchy.



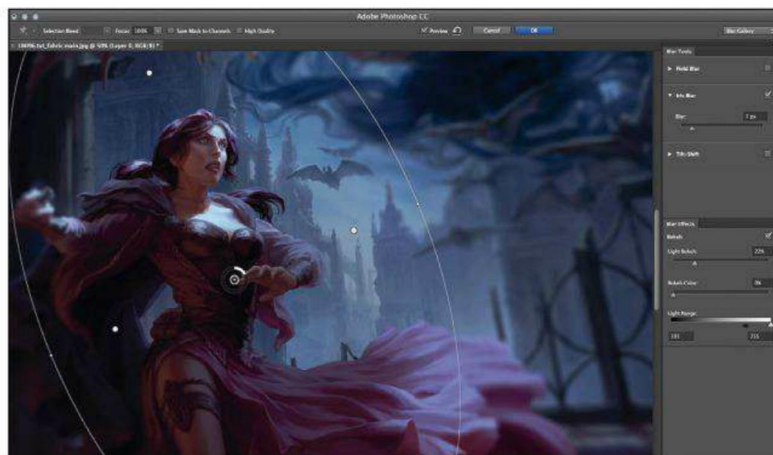
RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious

Reviews

Dave Kendall is no fan of Adobe's new payment model for Photoshop, meaning he'll return to traditional media, as used in this Batman portrait.



© DC/Warner Bros



The new version of Photoshop includes some excellent new Smart Object functionality – enabling you to quickly and non-destructively add blurs and liquify effects.



Adobe Creative Cloud

GLOOMY FORECAST Creative Suite is no more as Adobe moves to an all-subscription model. But does it offer good value to artists?

Price Varies – see boxout **Company** Adobe **Web** www.creative.adobe.com **Contact** Via website

With Adobe Creative Cloud the company has waved goodbye to boxed editions of its software. From now on, if you want Photoshop, Illustrator or any Adobe software, you're going to have to stump up a monthly subscription fee.

As digital artists, there are probably only two tools in Creative Cloud that you're really interested in: Photoshop and Illustrator. To get both of these on an individual program subscription will cost you £35.16 per month (£17.58 per month for each program). However, paying £46.88 per month gets you all of Adobe's tools – from Premiere to After Effects to InDesign. Not to mention access to services such as Typekit (web fonts), DPS Single Edition (for publishing a digital magazine to the App Store) and ProSite – to help create an online portfolio.

The sum of £46.88 per month for all Adobe's tools and some excellent services is fantastic value. However, for digital artists you're paying for tools you aren't going to use. If you're simply a Photoshop user, £17.58 per month could be seen as either a good move, because you no longer have to pay over £400 for a new version, or slightly annoying because you're tied in to a monthly cost.

So, what's new in Photoshop CC and Illustrator CC (note the CS for Creative Suite is no longer)? Well, quite a lot. In Photoshop, expanded Smart Object support is handy, enabling you to non-destructively apply blur and liquify

effects (meaning you can always go back and remove the effect), while improved 3D painting with faster live previews and enhanced 3D effects are a nice touch. Meanwhile, intelligent up-sampling takes the same kind of tech found in Genuine Fractals and brings it to Photoshop natively, so you can enlarge your images without losing as much detail as before.

Other new features include editable rounded rectangles, multi-shape and path selection and camera shake reduction – helping restore the sharpness of your shaky photos. Meanwhile, Smart Sharpen brings

“So what's new in Photoshop CC and Illustrator CC? Well, quite a lot”

better sharpening tools to Photoshop. There's not anything new really in terms of the brush-based painting tools, although you'll see a speed boost.

Whether Creative Cloud is for you depends on a few things. Can you make do with your older version of Photoshop? (If it's CS6 then probably yes, because the painting tools are comprehensive.) Is it easier to pay monthly than shell out a large amount for software upgrades? Do you want to keep up with latest releases? And do you want all of Adobe's tools? Once you've answered these questions, it's easy to make a decision.

DETAILS

Pricing options

£46.88/month (12 months), or £70.32/mth (cancel any time). £17.58/mth for single programs. £27.34/mth for CS3-5.5 users (for first year). £17.58/mth for CS6 users. £8.78/mth for CS3-6 users who want single programs.

Features

- Acrobat XI Pro
- After Effects CC
- Audition CC
- Digital Publishing Suite, Single Edition
- Dreamweaver CC
- Edge Animate
- Edge Code preview
- Edge Inspect
- Edge Reflow preview
- Edge Web Fonts
- Extension Manager
- ExtendScript Toolkit
- Fireworks CS6
- Flash Builder 4.7
- Premium Edition
- Flash Professional CC
- Illustrator CC
- InDesign CC
- Muse CC
- Photoshop CC
- Photoshop Lightroom 5
- Prelude CC
- Premiere Pro CC
- Scout
- SpeedGrade CC

System Requirements

Each program has its own system requirements – see www.bit.ly/ifx-cloud. Creative Cloud Desktop App: Windows 7 or 8, Mac OS X v10.7 or v10.8

Rating



ARTIST INTERVIEW

DAVE KENDALL

The renowned fantasy artist gives his opinions on Creative Cloud

How often do you upgrade your copy of Photoshop?

Since CS4 I've upgraded every version. CS6 will be my last unless Adobe does a major rethink.

So what do you think of Creative Cloud?

I think Adobe has gone a little bit insane. To date I own every tool in my studio, be it brushes, easels and paint, or Cintiq, PC and software. I've invested £1,000s in Adobe's software tools. If my earnings fail I can still create. With this model there's no room for failure or lean times. You stop paying? You lose the software. It's unforgivable treatment of a loyal customer base.

What do you think of paying £8.78 per month for Photoshop (if you're a CS3-6 user)?

If the price increase was in line with what I already pay that would be fine. However, being a Creative Suite owner, the price has just doubled. My upgrade cost for Creative Suite worked out at around £300 every 24 months. I use Photoshop and Illustrator. That would mean £16-odd a month at introductory prices, but with no idea of the increase after the first year. I don't want to hear about introductory pricing, we need to know about the long term.

Would you and other artists benefit from having all the other apps and services?

Photoshop is around 98 per cent of my digital creation tool use. Most artists will probably try out the extra programs, but will eventually stick with their software of choice. This is all about a money grab, not about giving us choice. I used Painter up to last year. I just found Photoshop more responsive. If Corel can tune Painter up I'll be running back to the company. I want to paint more anyway, so this is a good incentive to cut back on digital creation.

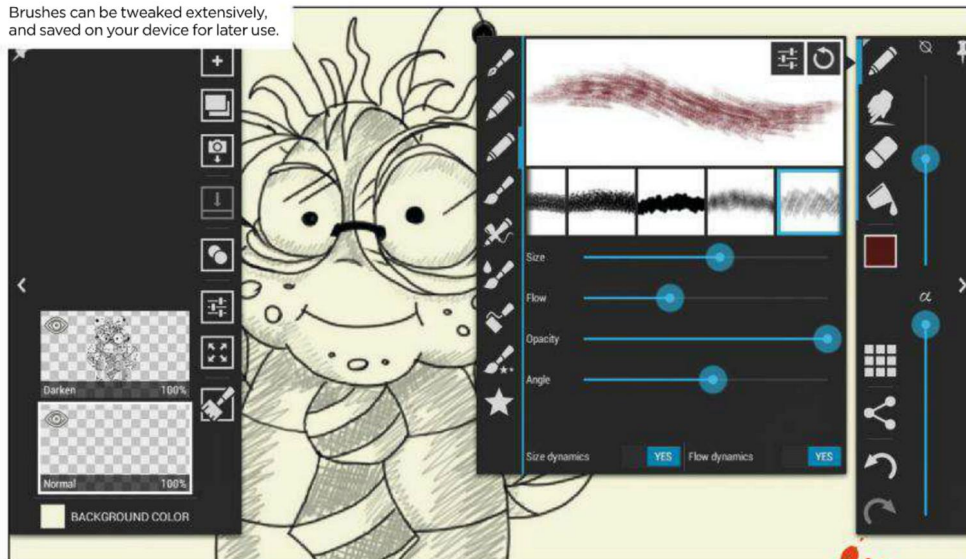


Dave is a fantasy and comic-book artist and illustrator who's worked for Mam Tor, 2000 AD and Metallica.

www.rustybaby.com



Brushes can be tweaked extensively, and saved on your device for later use.



ArtFlow

FULL FLOW The excellent new software for Android devices blows SketchBook out of the water

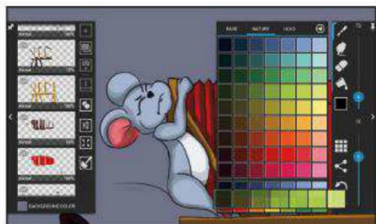
Android only

Price \$5 **Company** ArtFlow Studio **Web** www.artflowstudio.com **Contact** bjanusz@artflowstudio.com

Apple's iPad may still be our digital art tablet of choice, but Android devices are fast catching up. The sheer variety of smartphones and tablets (and "phablets") make them trickier to develop for, but they often include cool features such as fast, dedicated graphics processors and pressure sensitivity. They're far cheaper than Apple devices, too.

ArtFlow is another string to Android's bow. Unlike AutoDesk's SketchBook, it's been developed solely for Android devices, by ArtFlow Studio. It's also been built with the latest Holo aesthetic in mind, which means glowing circles highlight relevant information when you fire up the app. It's not a hugely important feature, but it makes the app feel a little more slick.

Like SketchBook, ArtFlow seeks to maximise your virtual canvas by keeping menu options tucked away



The free trial of ArtFlow has 10 tools and two layers, but lacks PSD export and only undoes six steps.

under tiny icons. Touch the tiny arrow to the left of the screen and you'll find options for layers, as well as settings for brightness and contrast, saturation and importing images and photos from your device. Touch to the right and you'll find brush options, an easy-to-use colour selector and a gallery of all your images.

It's a lot more intuitive and flexible than SketchBook's brow-furrowing radial menu, but it gives you access to many of the same tools.

There are some pretty nifty effects in the Brush menu as well, such as halftone rollers and random leaf and star stamps.

Where the program gets really clever, however, is in its pressure-sensitivity emulation. Use the tip of your finger and you get a fine line, but use your entire fingerprint and you get a much deeper, thicker one. It's only supported on some devices, but it worked perfectly on our Nexus 7.

The only minor issue we have with ArtFlow is that it's not compatible with certain smartphones, such as the HTC Sensation. Tablets are more suited to sketching anyway, but we'd like to have been able to make quick bits of art on our phones, too.

Overall, though, this is an amazing piece of new software that manages to trump SketchBook in just about every single way.

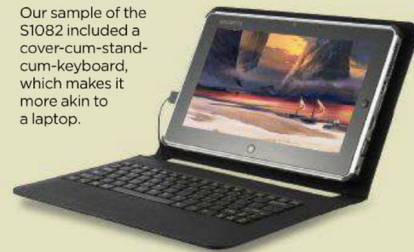
DETAILS

- 50+ brushes
- Infinite undo
- Stylus support
- 7-16 layers
- Effects
- Colour manipulation
- Custom colour palettes
- Optimised for chipsets
- Export to PSD, PNG, JPG
- Pressure simulation

System Requirements
Android 4.0 or above

Rating
★★★★★

Our sample of the S1082 included a cover-cum-stand-cum-keyboard, which makes it more akin to a laptop.



Gigabyte S1082

GOOD GIG Is the matt-screen tablet much use for plein air artists?

Price From £450

Company Gigabyte

Web www.gigabyte.com

Contact (phone)

1-626-854-9338

RATING ★★★★★

Gigabyte – best known for making PC components – has opted for a matt screen in its S1082 Windows 8 tablet, which could make it ideal for outdoor digital artists who don't want to work with the entire world reflected in their screen. It runs a full-blown installation of Windows 8, so in turn it's capable of running Photoshop et al.

While we've complained about Photoshop's feeble touch-support for Windows 8's tablets, Gigabyte provides a novel solution. A trackpad acts like a mini mouse and enables you to make finer, more accurate selections. You'll also find left and right mouse buttons to the left – we used them a lot more than we thought we would.

It's a shame Gigabyte hasn't quite got its head around the components that make up a good tablet. The paltry 64GB SSD supplied with our sample was half-filled with Windows 8. While this makes it snappy, the Celeron processor and onboard graphics mean it can't handle editing large images. Worse still is the battery, which only managed about three hours of light use.

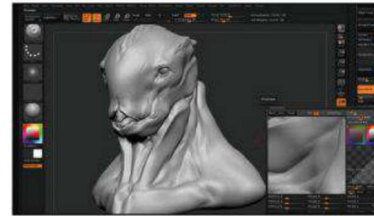


A nice touch is that the S1082 includes just about every port you'll ever need.

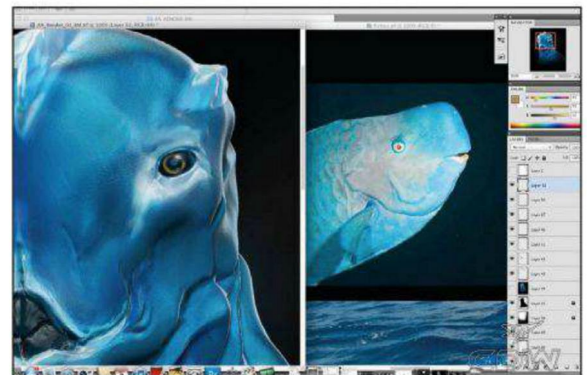
A concept like this would normally be digitally painted, but Ben Mauro created it using the 3D package ZBrush.



Ben's video shows how he takes a model from block-out to its final completed stages.



You'll pick up a ton of Photoshop tips for finishing off images.



ZBrush for Concept Artists Vol 1

3D VISION Concept art king Ben Mauro explains how to design creatures with virtual clay – and why you should be doing the same

Publisher Concept Design Workshop **Price** \$49 **Format** Download **Web** www.conceptdesignworkshop.com

Ben Mauro has a heads-up for every working or aspiring concept artist: it's time to acquire some new skills. He's seen a growing number of art directors for the film and game projects he's worked on request greater realism in the concepts he presents to them – an effect better achieved with 3D software like ZBrush than with digital painting. The client, says Ben, wants to be able to see how the concept would look in the finished project.

In ZBrush for Concept Artists, Ben sets out to help 2D artists adapt to this new reality by guiding you through the basics of this amazing software, which enables you to sculpt on your computer as if you were working in clay.

ZBrush is a powerful program, with more than a few idiosyncrasies. This can make it tough for newcomers to the 3D software to get to grips with. Ben does a great job here of presenting not just the basic ZBrush

tools, but how they relate to the work of a concept artist.

He combines ZBrush and Photoshop to make a complete creature concept from scratch, discussing along the way topics such as how design decisions reveal your character's personality, and how to add polish to your image. The video's two hours aren't enough to show Ben's full process, but he includes his ZBrush sculpt files and layered Photoshop documents, enabling you to study every step in detail.

ZBrush for Concept Artists is a useful video, and an important one if you're in the concept art business. But it's marred by the decision to edit together Ben's live presentation and a voice-over he recorded later. The difference in tone between the two recordings is obvious, and the effect of switching frequently between them is jarring. Fortunately, the video's high resolution, which enables you to see every detail of the ZBrush interface, acts as some compensation.

DETAILS

Topics covered

- ZBrush's basic tools
- Building a creature in ZBrush
- Creature design
- Digital painting in Photoshop
- Depicting surfaces
- Rendering techniques

Length

116 minutes

Rating



ARTIST PROFILE

BEN MAURO

Ben is a concept designer and digital sculptor. He's been working at Weta Workshop in Wellington, New Zealand since 2009, but also works on freelance projects. Ben has contributed to film, TV and game projects such as The Hobbit Trilogy, Elysium and Valerian. Before coming to Weta, he worked as a freelancer for various clients, including Lucasfilm, Rhythm & Hues, Activision, Universal Pictures, Sony Pictures Animation, Insomniac Games, Design Studio Press and Vishva Robotics.



www.artofben.com



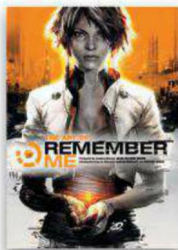
The Art of Remember Me

MEMORY LOSS The full visual story of how Capcom's amnesiac sci-fi game envisioned a stunning Paris of the future

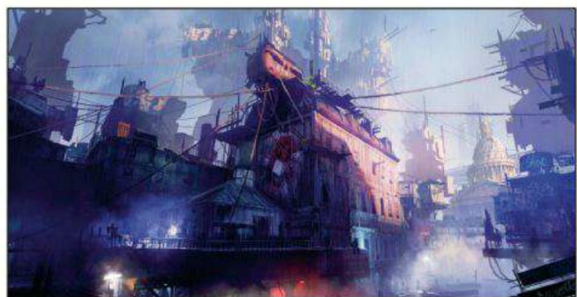
Editor Brendan Wright Publisher Dark Horse Books Price £30 Web www.darkhorse.com Available Now

While ImagineFX is loving the new installations of BioShock Infinite and Tomb Raider, it's good to know that game developers are still coming up with fresh ideas. Remember Me, developed by Parisian team DONTNOD, is a blend of Deus Ex's dystopia cyberpunk future and Mirror's Edge's frenetic combat, with some weird Strange Days-esque memory stuff on top.

Set in Paris in 2084, the player takes the role of Nilin, a rebel fighter who's had her mind wiped by Memorize, a corporation that subtly controls citizens by augmenting their memories. But Nilin herself has a hidden talent – she's able to enter people's minds and



Neo-Paris is stunning, one of the most intriguing and coherent worlds since City 17 in Half-Life 2.

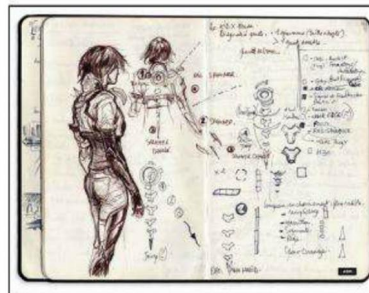


remix their memories. It's a unique approach, and one that adds an enticing layer to the game's combat, and also the game's art.

Nilin's design is covered briefly in this art-of book, showing how she's shaped by the events of the game. But, for the most part, the book focuses on the Neo-Parisian architecture of Remember Me's world. If you've ever visited the French capital then you'll recognise little bits of architecture and streets, which is in keeping with the game's themes of everything not being quite as we remembered it.

It's a stunning achievement, in keeping with Blade Runner's vision of a retrofitted LA and certainly one of the most intriguing and coherent worlds since Gordon Freeman's trip through City 17 in Half-Life 2. The book follows the chronology of the game, moving from the antiseptically clean Memorize headquarters to the ruins of the Bastille Plaza and the distinctly unkempt underground to the game's surreal, Rez-esque climax.

If there's a sticking point, it's that Remember Me is definitely a game. Occasionally enemies pop up, and while well designed, they seem a little



While the game's environment art is fantastic, some of the characters aren't as original or memorable.

generic and derivative. The female Seraphim bot could have jumped out of Deus Ex, and the junkie-like White Stains feel like rejects from Left 4 Dead.

The book is light on text, but that's not really a complaint. Creative and art directors Jean-Maxime Moris, Aleksis Briclot and Michel Koch contribute enlightening introductions, each of which gives their personal opinions on the game. A nice touch is that all the images are credited to artists. Overall, this is a fantastic look at a metropolis that's sure to join Neo-Tokyo in the annals of dystopian futures.

RATING 4/5

Vamps, Tramps & Beauties

PERSONAL WORK Women in various states of undress make up Greg Hildebrandt's pin-up sketches and studies

Author Greg Hildebrandt **Publisher** Virtual Graphics Opus **Price** £15
Web www.darkhorse.com **Available** Now

Greg Hildebrandt and his late twin brother Tim are best known for their creation of the first international Star Wars poster, and the legendary The Lord of the Rings calendars of the late-70s. But Greg has also maintained a sideline in creating illustrations of pin-up girls, and Vamps, Tramps & Beauties is a collection of his more personal work.



When we say personal we mean very, very personal, both thematically and artistically. Greg has a passion for Americana and the masters of pin-up. Here he taps into his influences, such as Gil Elvgren, to present sketches and portraits in the tradition of great American pin-up from the 40s and 50s. Greg pictures his femme fatales and Good Girls in a variety of noir and sci-fi situations. He certainly has a talent for capturing curves and salacious outfits, and Greg frequently comments on the images, citing teenage lust as the spark for his life-long interest in the female form.

A book of pulp nostalgia and retro pin-up portraits, Greg's latest collection of sketches and process pieces may be too sexualised for some, but there's no denying the artist's abilities within a traditional American art form.

RATING

The book has illustrations of pin-up girls in various states of undress.

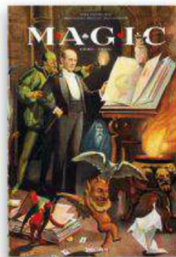


Magic: 1400s-1950s

ABRACADABRA Wonderful, in-depth if humongous volume celebrating the intriguing history of magic

Editor Noel Daniel **Authors** Jim Steinmeyer and Mike Caveney **Publisher** Taschen **Price** £135
Web www.taschen.com **Available** Now

Taschen's book of magic between the dark ages and the mid-20th-century is absolutely huge. Merely picking it up and opening it is a workout in itself, but the cornucopia of fascinating magic-related art within makes it worth the effort. It ranges from posters to woodcuts to behind-the-scenes photos, and it's an incredibly in-depth guide.



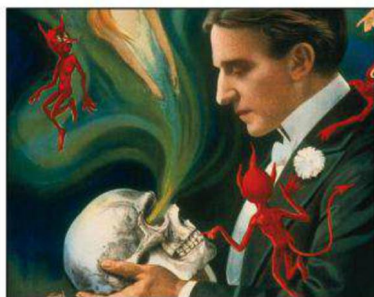
What's apparent is that magic is a combination of art, technology and showmanship. It's ironic that cinema took over from magic as the people's activity of choice, because it's based on many of the same foundations. The book's funny too – one poster for Maskelyne and Cooke's London show boasts that Cooke will "have his head severed from his body twice daily".

Facets of magic are broken down chapter-by-chapter, such as black magic and stage illusions, and many of the images depict magicians as having contact with demons on the other side. At the time, we imagine, this would've been understood as genuine contact with the dead – this before Wikipedia took all the fun out of it.

This is a weighty book that's sure to inspire and surprise in equal measure.

RATING

Magicians didn't used to be nearly as irritating as David Blaine.



Also look at...

Get inspired by the latest recommended fiction

River of Stars

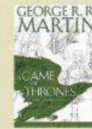
Author Guy Gavriel Kay
Publisher Harper Fiction **Price** £19
Available 25 July



This sumptuous tale of medieval China on the brink of war is ripe with poetic imagery that lingers long after the page has been turned. It's so enjoyable to journey alongside such a rich and engaging cast as their actions shape the destinies of others, often profoundly. Guy's elegant writing style is evocative without being overly dense, which makes the task of reading such a lengthy novel all the more indulgent.

A Game of Thrones: Volume 2

Author and artist Daniel Abraham and Tommy Patterson
Publisher Harper Voyager **Price** £15
Available Now



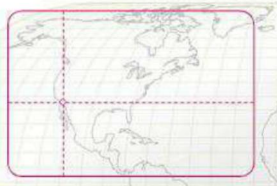
Adapted from George RR Martin's fantasy medieval world, Daniel Abraham's pared-down text and Tommy Patterson's action-filled art style offers another, worthwhile vision in this graphic novel. Characters aren't recognisable from the TV series, and we focus on King's Landing as Eddard Stark is Hand of the King. You may know how it ends, but this comic zips along at speed and it's hard not to get swept up in this superior tale all over again.

Anarchy

Author James Treadwell
Publisher Hodder & Stoughton
Price £17 **Available** Now



What happens when magic returns to a world that no longer believes in it? Set in this context, James Treadwell's trilogy modernises old fantasy ideas. Anarchy is the sequel to Advent, and has no care for newcomers. If you missed Advent, you may feel bewildered. But James's style draws you in. From Canada to Cornwall, it's alive with vile creatures, sweeping mysteries and the best-written female characters in young adult fiction. A unique voice.



LOCATION Los Angeles, US **WEB** www.cgma2dacademy.com **PROGRAMS** Foundation, Environment and Character Design Programs

Ryan Lang painted this Hansel and Gretel scene during the training programme at Disney.



© Disney

Computer Graphics Master Academy

KNOWLEDGE BASE Passing industry experience on to the next wave of talented artists, CGMA offers a fresh twist on creative training

Founded in Los Angeles by a trio of industry pros, Computer Graphics Master Academy (CGMA) provides top-quality online training in digital art techniques to help develop the next wave of creative talent.

Its biggest asset is a team of 2D and 3D instructors (or 'Masters', as CGMA prefers to call them), drawn from a dazzling array of world-leading studios such as Disney, Blizzard, DreamWorks and Pixar.

"Our desire to open an online art school arose out of a passion to



provide the art education that we never got," says co-founder Lilliams Garcia, a fine artist who heads up the Academy's

Foundation/Design Program. "An education that's affordable and accessible, but that doesn't sacrifice quality instruction."

Lilliams believes there's an oversaturation of sub-par, low-quality schools that can be both prohibitively expensive to attend and detached from the realities of the industry. She strongly believes that CGMA's

These concepts for The Croods were produced by Jason Scheier - CGMA students will be learning from the best in the business.

DreamWorks artist Jason Scheier passes on his environment concept art knowledge.



An example of co-founder Lilliams Garcia's work, who trained as a fine artist.



© DreamWorks Animation

approach brings something fresh. "Many schools hire inexperienced instructors, who in turn will graduate ill-prepared graduates," Lilliams adds. "As many more students face bleaker job prospects during these tough economic times, they grow disenchanted with art education as a viable means to make a living."

As an online academy, CGMA welcomes recruits from all over the world. "We're not limited by geography when searching for - and employing - the very best in the industry," Lilliams points out. "We also don't require a huge campus, saving money that we can then pass down to our students in the form of low tuition rates."

At the same time, being based in California puts the team at the heart of the entertainment industry, with a wealth of world-class studios on the doorstep. When recruiting instructors



ARTIST INTERVIEW

RYAN LANG

In a world of artistic voices, Ryan says good communication is key

What benefits do you get from teaching?

This may sound like a bit of a cliché, but teaching is its own reward. It's awesome to help someone understand something. It also forces me to break down my own process and causes me to be more critical of my decisions.

Has the industry helped prepare you for the classroom?

One of the biggest things I've gained from working in the industry is communication. Not only do I have to produce work, but also to articulate ideas. I try to be clear in my descriptions of concepts in a session. If you identify clear goals then people have an easier time getting to them.

Why would you recommend aspiring artists take a course with CGMA?

CGMA has a great variety of talented instructors who are professionals from varying fields. You might learn an ideation technique in an environment design class that you can apply to a mech design project, or the other way around. It's a place to learn from working professionals.

Can you tell us what it's like teaching students from all over the world?

I'm terrified of pronouncing names incorrectly, so the first couple of classes are a little nerve-racking. Aside from that, I feel really lucky to be exposed to different perspectives and artistic sensibilities.

Do you have any advice for aspiring concept artists?

Draw and paint a lot. Push yourself to improve and keep practising. That being said, be true to yourself and what you want to do. You'll spend a lot of time working, so make sure you love it – let your portfolio be an honest representation of what you want to do.

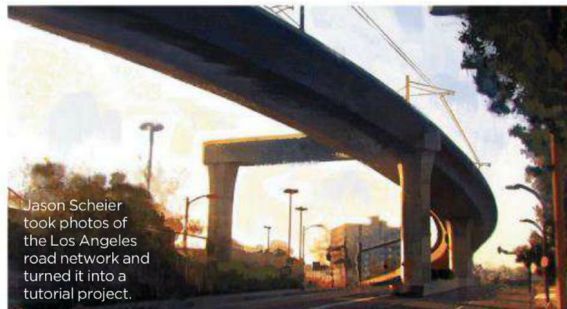


Ryan is a visual development artist at Disney Animation, and an instructor on CGMA's Art of Colour and Light course.

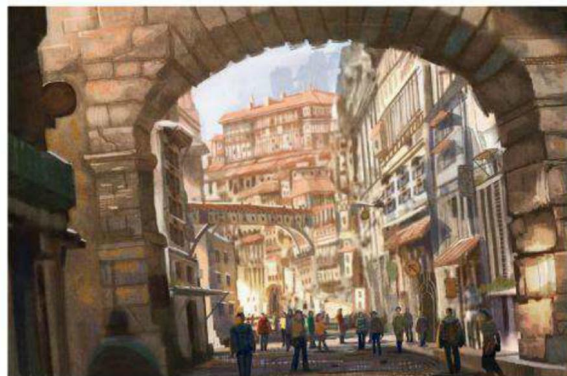
www.ryanlangportfolio.blogspot.co.uk



SELECTED CLASSES Dynamic Sketching, Fundamentals of Character Design, Character Design for Animation



Jason Scheier took photos of the Los Angeles road network and turned it into a tutorial project.



Take your environment art to the next level with help from Jason Scheier, who painted this street scene.

there are three stages: finding talent, reviewing their work and finally screening them to gauge their teaching abilities. "Not every great artist makes a great teacher," he admits. "There are many individuals who we'd love to bring on board, but because they don't have that last

“There is so much to learn... I think we're only limited by what we believe ourselves capable of”



trait, we unfortunately have to pass."

One artist who did make CGMA's cut is Jason Scheier, a visual development artist at DreamWorks.

"Teaching is an immensely gratifying experience for me," enthuses the CGMA Master, whose enviable film credits include Kung Fu Panda and the sequel, Monsters vs Aliens and Megamind.

"Not only is it an amazing source of inspiration, but interacting with my students also keeps me grounded, and helps me to stay fresh and mindful of the world around me," Jason



Ryan Lang, who knows a thing or two about character art, painted this figure of a knight from photo references.

goes on. "Ultimately though, it's about giving back what I know."

Passionate about art from an early age, he first developed a particular interest in concept art during his second college program, when he was taught by Carlo Arellano – character designer for Tim Burton's reimagining

of Planet of the Apes and Blizzard's World of Warcraft.

Jason's own concept art is notable for its evocative environments and strong sense of mood, and he applies his considerable experience to the Fundamentals for Creative Environment Design course at CGMA.

"Working professionally has honed me to be a better suited communicator," he believes. "It helps me to focus on the skill sets that my students need to become amazing artists. Even in the professional world there is so much to learn and fill up our think tanks with. I think we're only limited by what we believe ourselves capable of."



Here's Ryan Lang's interpretation of Conan the Barbarian.

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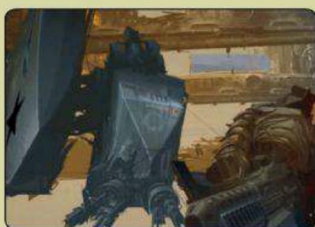


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